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WHAT WE MAKE IT.

Let's often talk of noble deeds,
And rarer of the bad ones,
And sing about our happy days,
And none about the sad ones.
We were not made to fret and sigh,
And when grief sleeps to wake it,
Bright happiness is standing by—
This life is what make it.

Let's find the sunny side of men,
Or be believers in it;
A light there is in every soul
That takes the pains to win it.
Oh! there's a slumbering good in all,
And we perchance may wake it;
Our hands contain the magic wand—
This life is what we make it.

Then here's to those whose loving heart,
Shed light and joy about them!
Thanks be to them for countless gems
We ne'er had known without them.
Oh! this should be a happy world
To all who may partake it;
The fault's our own if it is not—
This life is what we make it.

Two Wedding Rings.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BLACK VEIL," "HER MOTHER'S CRIME," "A BROKEN WEDDING-RING," "MABEL MAY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

FROM the first moment that the Water-Queen sailed down the river there was a strong impression on board that something or other was wrong with the captain and his wife.

No one knew what it was, no one could say anything definite about the matter; there was no real gossip or scandal, yet the impression was strong amongst the passengers that all was not well between the captain and his wife.

The Water-Queen was a large, first-class steamer bound for India—the captain, Eric Hardross, an able and clever seaman.

The first view of the steamer delighted me.

With immense engines, she looked like a very queen of the seas, as though the wildest waves must obey her, as though danger could not come near her. Standing on the deck in the sweet, warm sunlight, I watched the passengers as they came on board.

I saw fair-haired little children with fond mothers and proud fathers.

I saw young men in the prime of life fair-faced girls, young wives thoughtful matrons.

And then, still standing like one in a dream, I saw the sunshine gilding the tall spires and steeples of the city; I saw the light in the ripples of the river; I heard the cry of the sailors, and, more clearly than all, the music of a band that was playing "Auld Lang Syne."

I felt a lump in my throat as the notes of the music died in the distance and the city spires faded from sight.

It was quite three days before the passengers began to know each other, or to grow accustomed to the strange new life.

From the first none of us cared much for the captain; he was a tall, dark, hard-featured man, with large dark eyes that in moments of agitation took a peculiar golden hue.

I felt sure that there was something of the Creole in him; and I learned afterward that his mother had been one of the most beautiful of Creoles and his father an Englishman.

He was a man of great nautical skill.

He had been for many years captain of some of the finest ships of the day.

It was wonderful to note with what consummate skill and ease he managed the huge beautiful vessel that rose so proudly over the waves.

His was not a cruel face.

I saw it once when he was watching some children at play on the deck, and it softened into positive kindness; but it was a face that gave to every one the idea that he was a stern, unbending, passionate man.

There were all the fire and the jealousy of the Creole in it.

The lips were firm and hard, the features regular, but almost forbidding in their cold hard aspect.

I felt that my life was safe in his hands, but I should have been unwilling to trust to his kindness the child whom I loved.

At the end of three days matters began to take a regular course.

Those who had suffered severely from sea-sickness recovered—the passengers knew each other—and, when we met at the dinner table, there was something like an attempt at comfort and even enjoyment.

We were out in broad ocean then.

The green shores, the purple hills, the white cliffs had long vanished, and in their place we had the glistening, gleaming waters, the color of which seemed to be always changing—a wide world of waters that appeared to have neither limit nor bounds.

We met altogether for the first time at dinner.

I remember the names of most of the passengers.

They are written in an imperishable record.

There were Major Stanton and his wife, with two children—a perfect type of the happy English family—she, sweet, loving, and fair; he, strong, proud, and brave.

There were a young husband and wife who amused us all, yet who won all hearts by their simple child-like adoration of each other—Mr. and Mrs. Leslie—the husband a handsome young Scotchman, who was going out to Calcutta as the representative of a wealthy firm.

Charlie Leslie was very soon one of the most popular characters on board.

He could pour forth a song in a rich cheery voice; his laughter had something irresistible in it; his face was always bright with a sunshiny smile.

His wife Helen was a pretty, fair-haired girl, who never seemed to hear any one except her husband.

Then there was a handsome, stately brunette, Mrs. Chaplin, who had been to place her children at school in England—a beautiful woman, in whose dark eyes lay the shadow of coming sorrow. There were Mr. and Mrs. Vann.

He was short, stout, and round, and lived in perpetual fear of his wife.

He had evidently risen from the ranks, for, despite all his efforts and the fierceness of his wife, he could never properly manage the letter A, and his grammar was what an American would call "various."

His wife had two great fears; one was, lest she should grow stout—the other, that she should be taken for a person of "common extraction."

She entertained us with stories of her father, who had "held a position under Government," leaving us greatly impressed, as she thought.

Those were the principle characters, and that day, as we sat round the table, we looked with quiet interest at each other.

It was then that I first heard the captain speak of his wife. He looked down the long table, and in a stern voice asked of the steward—

"Where is Mrs. Hardross?" The answer was prompt enough.

"Mrs. Hardross is not well, sir, and does not wish to leave her cabin."

I sat near the captain, and could see a frown darkening his face.

"Tell her that I insist upon it," he said, almost savagely.

Mrs. Chaplin, our stately brunette, sat next to him, and she raised her beautiful eyebrows in surprise at the words and the voice.

"You are peremptory, captain," she said, with ill-disguised contempt.

"Madam, the worst of all folly is to encourage folly in others," he replied.

"I regret that I have not the pleasure of understanding you," she said.

"My wife, madam, is pleased to affect a great fear of the sea, and I am unwilling to encourage her in such folly."

"It is possible that it may not be folly—that she may really dread the water. Nerves of iron are not given to every one," said Mrs. Chaplin.

"Our nerves, madam," rejoined the captain, brusquely, 'are very much what we choose to make them."

And the beautiful brunette, not liking such heresy, turned from him with a face expressive of the most unbounded contempt; while I sat in silence, trying to solve the problem why a lady who was afraid of the sea should have married a sea-captain.

A rumor soon began to circulate amongst us that the captain was really unkind to his wife—that she was young, beautiful, yet greatly afraid of him—that in the silence of the night, when all was calm on the great ocean, cries and moans had been heard in her cabin.

Some persons went further, and told of the sound of oaths and blows, followed by silence even more terrible.

How much truth there was in these stories no one knew.

A week passed before we saw Mrs. Hardross.

She never came to deck; she did not join us at the dinner-table or in the grand saloon.

One or two ladies, braver than the rest, inquired after her; and, when Captain Hardross was amiably disposed, he would answer that she was not well—when he was cross, his reply would be studied and more brusque.

One lovely evening a fresh wind was blowing, and the water was clear and blue.

Mrs. Chaplin was sitting on deck, with her dark beautiful face raised to the sky.

Liking her very much, I went up to her.

"What do you see in the clouds, Mrs. Chaplin?" I asked.

She turned to me with a sad smile.

"They are white and fleecy," she replied. "To me they all take the shape of children—little children with wings."

"Little children with wings would be angels," I remarked.

The dreamy look deepened in her eyes.

"Wings that seem to be flying away, beckoning as they fly, Sir Gordon," she added.

Just then the captain passed near us, and saluted the lady with a very stiff and formal bow.

"I do not like the captain," said Mrs. Chaplin, suddenly. "I am quite sure that he is very unkind to his wife. I wish she would come on deck; I should like to know her. I have great compassion for all unhappy wives."

"She may not be unhappy," I then remarked.

"Look at his face, Sir Gordon," she replied. "In it I read will, strength, power, force, determination, passion, and jealousy; but I do not see one softer trait, not one grace sufficient to win or to keep a woman's heart. That man would have no mercy, no pity, no compassion; and I am quite sure that he makes his wife wretched."

"I do not care sufficiently for him to argue in his favor or to plead his cause, Mrs. Chaplin.

"I am willing to admit that he is a Blue Beard, if you like."

"He is worse," she replied. "Blue Beard never had such a face as that."

I forgot her words soon afterward, for the night fell—and it was such a night as does not often fall.

The sky was clear, dark blue; the stars were not visible, but the moon shone with a radiance bright as day.

The face of the great ocean was lit up; the waves broke into silvery spray; there was just sufficient wind blowing to freshen the waves, and the great steamer rushed on its way, cleaving the water and leaving a white track behind.

I could not leave the moonlight.

I went to the side of the ship, and leaning over I noticed the white, shining, silvery foam.

I had been there some short time when I heard the sound of a light footstep near; looking up, I saw a tall, slight figure leaning in the same fashion over the bulwarks watching the moonlight on the deep waters.

The lady did not seem to notice my presence, and I had ample time to study her.

I saw a face that was in some vague way akin to the moonlight; it was so perfect in its delicate beauty that it reminded me of nothing else.

I have lived many years since that moonlight night, yet I have seen nothing like that face—and never shall.

There was something at once soft and dazzling in it; it was of the pure Grecian type, with broad low brow, from which hair of dead gold waved in natural ripples.

The marvellous beauty of the face was increased by the strange contrast between the color of the eyes and the hair.

The hair was of dead gold, the eyes were dark as night, with white heavily fringed lids—dreamy, sad eyes in which lay a great nameless, boundless fear.

The beautiful lips wore lines and curves all expressive of sadness; the delicate face was sorrowful as she bent down to watch the silvery foam.

I cannot tell how or why—I knew that I was looking upon the wife of a brave if not a kindly man—thought or idea of love was far from me—yet during that moment something awoke in my heart which never slept again.

We stood for some time in silence, the moonlight falling on us.

Suddenly raising her eyes, she saw me, and a low cry came from her beautiful lips.

"Pray do not be startled," I said; "I am watching the moonlight on the waves."

She smiled.

For the first time I saw how lovely her face could be.

The sadness fell from it like a mask, beautiful dimples came into play.

"I am not startled," she replied; "but this is the first time I have been on deck and it is quite a new world to me.

Then I knew that the beautiful, fragile, delicate girl was the captain's wife.

He was a man of fifty; she did not look more than eighteen.

I introduced myself to her, asking if she was better, telling her how sorry the passengers were that she was ill.

It was difficult to realize that this delicate fragile girl was the wife of the stern, grim captain.

"I do not think," she said thoughtfully, "that I have been really ill. The truth is that I am afraid of the sea."

Her voice sank into a soft, dreamy whisper as she repeated the words.

"I cannot tell how it is," she continued; "standing here, I own that there can be no grander spectacle than this, but I am frightened at it."

"Did your husband—did Captain Hardross know that when he brought you with him?" I asked, abruptly.

Her face grew crimson at the question, but she answered it.

"I think so—I always told him I was afraid of the sea."

"In that case it would have been better, I think, to leave you on land while the voyage was made," I said.

"I asked Captain Hardross to do that, but he was not willing," she replied.

"Mrs. Hardross," I said, after a time, "will you tell me why you are frightened at the sea?"

She raised her dark dreamy eyes to mine, and I saw slumbering in their depths that which, when aroused, would wake them to greater splendor.

"I should like to tell you if I knew how. I have always been afraid of the sea. One of the dreams that I had when I was a child was that I stood on the shore of a great wide sea, and that the waves rose and fell without any noise—that they broke on the shore without any sound; and the dream of that silent sea terrified me."

"No wonder," I said—"the idea was a ghastly one."

"Then," she continued, "another idea of the sea used to come to me. It was of a great wide waste of waters, black as darkest night, and without any end—a sea on which one could sail through all eternity as it were."

"That is another horrible idea," I said, wondering at the strangely sad pictures that pursued her.

"There is another worse still," she went on—"a dream which I used to have of finding myself quite alone on a sea that was gradually growing darker and darker.

"I have read many beautiful lines that the poets have written. I always remember Byron's—

'Roll on, thou dark blue Ocean roll.'

But even that line has a kind of terror for me.

"The noise of the waves breaking on the shore seems to me always an echo of eternity.

"Where others see beauty I see only terror and deadly fright."

"That is a morbid fear," I said, wondering more and more.

"Is it?" she questioned, sadly. "I cannot help it. You who are strong and brave laugh at such ideas.

"You would be sorry for me if you knew how terrified I feel when I wake in the night, and remember that there is only a thin barrier between me and my enemy, the sea.

"I can hear the waves, and they fill my whole heart with fear.

"I see them limpid, clear, and green. Oh, how they terrify me! I long for one glimpse of land."

"I must seem inquisitive, Mrs. Hardross; but it puzzles me greatly to know why, with this great fear, you have undertaken a sea voyage."

"It was undertaken for me," she replied—"I was not consulted about it. Do you think, Sir Gordon, that my fear is a sign—an omen—that one day I shall be drowned?"

Was I cruel to laugh at the question?

She asked it with such child-like innocence and candor, with such tender, earnest eyes.

"I will venture to prophesy that you will never be drowned, Mrs. Hardross," I said.

The girlish face cleared, and she looked at me again with a smile.

"Thank you. I have read many stories of people who were afraid of the sea, and in the end such people were always drowned."

"We will hope for a happier fate, Mrs. Hardross.

"Humanly speaking, there is no cause for fear.

"Our ship is a wonder of strength, speed and solidity, and——"

My sentence was never finished.

There was a quick, firm footstep; a strong hand was laid on the girl's shoulder—a stern face then peered down into hers.

"So you have found your way on deck at last, Laurie?" he said. "I did not expect to find you here."

She looked at him with something of the fear with which delicate and sensitive children regard a stern teacher.

I saw her little white hand tremble. My heart was stirred with strange, sad pity for her.

"It seems rather curious that you should prefer such an hour as this," continued her husband.

"Other ladies come on deck during the day-time and talk sociably together; you wait for night."

"And talk to a stranger," he added, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

Just then the moon disappeared behind a mass of clouds, and for a few moments the silvery light was obscured.

Thick darkness fell over the face of the waters.

Mrs. Hardross cried aloud in terror, and the captain, turning to her angrily, said—

"Frightened again, I suppose! You are a brave woman!"

Poor girl!

She trembled, she shuddered, while the dark waters rose and fell with a sullen leaden sound.

"What a dark sea!" she cried. "How troubled it looks—just as though it were closing in on us!"

"I could not have believed unless I had seen," said the captain, laughing, "how foolish women can be.

"You would not be afraid, Laurie, of the darkness that falls over the fields and the lanes, would you?"

"No; but then I love the fields and the woods."

It seemed to me that a soft music came into her voice, as though the memory of fields and woods was very dear to hear.

I thought to myself—

"Could any one have been cruel enough to drag this delicate young girl from the green heart of the land, from the midst of flowers and trees and birds, to the sea, the very name of which fills her with great fear?"

"I think," said the captain, "that you would show better sense, Laurie, if you thought less of the land you have left and more of the sea you are sailing over. After all, it is morbid nervous nonsense—you are as safe on sea as on land. Do you not agree with me, Sir Gordon?"

"Yes, in some respects. Did you ever hear those beautiful words, Mrs. Hardross: that heaven is as near by sea as by land?"

Her face quite changed its expression whenever she turned to me.

It grew younger and brighter.

"I have never heard them, but I know they are true."

"Then try to be a little more sensible," said the captain brusquely. "I might as well have married a baby—better, perhaps; I could have stopped its crying when I would. I cannot make a foolish woman wise."

A soft sigh passed the sweet lips.

"I will try, Eric," she said; "but I am afraid."

"Why are you here to-night?" he asked, so abruptly and with such a disagreeable look toward me that I had some difficulty in controlling myself.

Even in the moonlight I saw her face grow crimson.

"I thought that if I ventured on deck now no one would see how frightened I was," she answered.

A contemptuous laugh was the only answer.

The sound of it made my blood boil.

"You have been here quite long enough for the first time," said the captain, after a silence that was painful. "Sir Gordon, may I trouble you to walk up the deck with Mrs Hardross?"

I made no answer.

There was a strange beating of my heart, a strange thrill in my veins, as the little white hand seemed to flutter on my arm.

The captain turned away abruptly, and we walked down the deck together. What should I say to her in my mad boyish fashion?

I longed to tell her how grieved I was for her, how I pitied her, sympathized with her.

And when I tried to speak to her I was like one dumb, my lips seemed locked in silence.

While the waves rushed laughingly by, and the clear white light lay on the waters.

"Do not think me curious, Mrs. Hardross," I said, presently, "but may I ask what was the name the captain called you by?"

I cannot tell what induced me to ask the question but she looked at me with the brightest smile I had yet seen on her face.

"My name is a very old-fashioned one," she replied, "but there is something in the sound of it that reminds one of the braes and gowans.

"I was called Laurie Stuart before my marriage."

Laurie Stuart—no other name could have suited her half so well as Laurie.

It had a ring in it like the music of church bells.

I repeated the name with passionate eagerness new to me.

It seemed like the sweetest poem poets could ever dream, the sweetest music ever echoed.

Laurie Stuart—should I ever tire of whispering the name?

"My father was a Scotchman, but my mother was an English lady, the calm, sweet voice said.

"Are you Scotch, Sir Gordon?" she asked and I answered, "No," though I would have given half that I had to be able to say "Yes."

She seemed a little disappointed.

"You have a Scotch name and title," she added.

And then I told her that my father was an Englishman, but that my mother was the only sister of old Sir Archibald Clanalpen, whose title and estates I had inherited, and whose name I had assumed.

"Still you love Scotland?" she said, half pleadingly.

"Yes, I love it; and, Mrs. Hardross, if you will come on deck sometimes instead of sitting always in your cabin, we can talk about Scotland.

"I should like it, and I should not be afraid if you were here to talk kindly to me," she said.

The door of her cabin was half open, and I saw the light shining through it.

"Good-night, Sir," she said, gently; "you are very kind."

I do not know even now how I dared do it, or why I did it; but as I took her hand in mine, I said—

"Good-night. Heaven bless you, Laurie Stuart!"

And the next moment I stood, with the clasp of her hand still warm in mine, alone on the moonlit deck.

CHAPTER II.

THE second time I saw Mrs. Hardross was one evening when the air was cold and damp.

A slight mist of rain made the decks uncomfortable, and something like a concert was got up amongst the passengers.

The grand saloon was brilliantly lighted, the ladies were gayly dressed; it was difficult to imagine that we were shut up in a ship that large as it was, was yet a prison—that outside the wooden walls lay the great dark restless ocean.

I had lingered some few minutes over my cigar, and, on entering the grand saloon, found the whole of the assembled passengers seated in different groups.

Mrs. Chaplin presided at the piano. She raised her dark eyes as I entered and saluted me with a kindly smile.

"I shall sing something that you will like soon, Sir Gordon," she said, as I passed.

Seated near a small table I saw the captain's wife—the beautiful girl whom in my heart I called Laurie Stuart.

I looked at her for some minutes before she saw me.

This self-possessed, high-bred, graceful woman in no way resembled the frightened girl with whom I had walked the deck, who had hung to me shudderingly at the sound of the sea.

In the full light I saw that her dark eyes were fathomless and luminous; that her hair had a golden hue.

A smile, half proud, half weary, was around her delicate lips.

She smiled when she saw me, and I went to her.

"Good evening, Sir Gordon," said Mrs. Vann, as I passed by her chair.

"This is charming, is it not? It reminds me of the parties my dear father used to give—he held a good position Government, you know. What a fine voice Mrs. Chaplin has!"

I passed her with a bow. She looked annoyed because I did not stop to talk to her.

"'Appy to see you, Sir Gordon," said Mr Vann; and then he turned a deeper crimson remembering the lost *h*.

I stood by Mrs. Hardross at last, and the proud, weary smile changed into one of kindly recognition.

I sat down by her side.

She was the loveliest girl I had ever seen.

She had dazzled me.

My brain was whirling; in my ears there sounded only the echo of her name—Laurie Stuart; yet I never for one moment forgot that she was the wife of another man—and as such I respected and esteemed her.

"I was hoping that you would come," she said.

"We have had some nice music. I like Mrs. Chaplin's voice; there is an undertone of sadness in it."

"You are looking much better, Mrs. Hardross," I remarked; "you are overcoming your fear of the sea."

The smile deepened until bewitching dimples came into play.

"You do not understand the secret of my recovery, Sir Gordon," she laughed. "Here in the saloon, when the lamps are lighted, I cannot see the sea. I cannot hear the muffled sound that frightens me in my cabin.

"I cannot realize, in the midst of this brightness and music, that outside—so close to us—lies the great dark restless ocean."

"Do not think about it then. Try to fancy you are at what Mrs. Vann would call a party at home."

"Or fancy that I have but to walk down a pretty little entrance-hall, and open a door leading to a garden, where the roses are laughing in the moonlight, and the dew lies like great tears on the white lilies?"

"You have a quick imagination, Mrs. Hardross; why not try to think of the beauties of the sea? Surely there are plenty.

"Think of the great heaving ocean, all silver under the light of the moon, all silver under the light of the moon, all golden in the glow of the sun. Think of the mighty world under the waves. There are poetry and romance in those deep, silent, unknown regions."

"I love the living, laughing beauty of the land far better," she said. "I love the green fields; the late chestnut trees, the fire of the roses, the gleam of lilies, the fragrance of lilacs; I love the dew and the rain the orchards, the gardens, the birds and the butterflies—not the cruel relentless sea."

Just then Mrs. Chaplin began the song she had promised me. It was an old Scotch melody.

I saw the dark luminous eyes fill with tears.

"That is very beautiful," said the captain's young wife; and in a low, soft voice she repeated the refrain to herself. "I love the Scotch songs," she said, turning to me; "they are full of feeling. I was named after a song. My mother's brother was a soldier."

I was pleased, flattered, delighted that she who was so reserved with others should speak so freely to me.

"A soldier? Tell me about him," I said; and she went on:

"He was a lieutenant in the Army, young and handsome, I have heard my father say.

"He went to the Crimea, and he wrote home telling my mother how, on the eve of a great battle, under the silence of the darkening sky, the soldiers sang the old loved song of 'Annie Laurie.'" He told us how the words

'For bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and dee.'

rang out from east to west—how many who sang the song round the camp fires did lie down the next day to die.

"My mother said that when she had the letter I was a wee baby in her arms, and that while her tears lay warm on my face she resolved to call me 'Laurie' in memory of the old Scotch song and the brave soldiers who sang it."

I looked at the graceful slender figure, the beautiful refined face, and from that moment I never thought of her as the captain's wife or as Laurie Stuart, but as Annie Laurie, the lovely Scotch maiden whose face was "the fairest that e'er the sun shone on."

We talked happily enough while the strains of the music rose and fell and all sounds of the waves were hushed. Suddenly I saw a change come over her face, and by instinct I knew that the captain was near.

He stopped on his way to speak to two or three people, and then came to his wife's chair.

"Well, Laurie," said the quick, stern voice, "how are you? I am glad to see you here."

"I am very happy," she replied, shyly. "I am not frightened now, Eric."

He did not respond with kind or encouraging words, but with quick impatient gesture, an angry frown, and a darkening of the eyes.

"I shall be very glad, Laurie, when you have finished with that absurd nonsense. A child may talk about being frightened—a woman never should."

She might have pleaded in excuse that she was almost a child—only eighteen, she could not be called a woman—but she pleaded nothing; the dark eyes drooped and the delicate lips trembled.

I remember my intense longing to seize the captain and fling him overboard.

"You will find some charming ladies on board, she continued; "and I do hope, Laurie, that in time you will learn to be cheerful and lively, as they are."

"I will do my best," she said, with such sweet humility that I thought her almost an angel.

Then Mrs. Vann came up to her.

"I am so glad, Mrs. Hardross," she said, "to see that you are beginning to feel at home with us. A sailor's wife should not know fear."

She looked up with more courage than I thought she possessed.

"I fear nothing but the sea," she said.

"That is right. I fancied, from what I heard, that perhaps you feared not being quite at home with us."

"Why, madam?" asked the young girl, with a steady calmness that brought a flush to Mrs. Vann's face:

"I really hardly know why I have the impression," replied Mrs. Vann.

She had intended to be blandly patronizing and assure the captain's young wife that there was nothing to be dreaded from her superiority; but the calm, proud eyes rejected the patronage, and again Laurie—I can call her by no other name—spoke.

"I am afraid of the sea," she said; "but I have not the least fear of anything else in the wide world."

"Except the captain, we will hope," returned Mrs. Vann, trying to be witty; and the girl's face grew pale at the words. "If I can help you, Mrs. Hardross, in any way," continued the lady, bent upon patronage, "I shall be only too pleased."

Mrs. Chaplin, who seemed to understand people by instinct, came up at that moment and, bowing coldly to Mrs. Vann, took Laurie's hand in hers.

"They tell me that the rain and mist have passed way," she said, "and that the moonlight is beautiful. Will you come on deck with me?"

That Mrs. Hardross's fear was not an affected one was easy to see.

She grew pale again, even to her lips.

Mrs. Vann laughed. Mrs. Chaplin said, gravely:

"I understand it so well. I assure you that in time you will outgrow it. I rode and drove now; I like a spirited horse, and could not do with a quiet one. But I remember when I was a thousand times more terrified at horses than you are at the sea. Come with us, Sir Gordon, and we will give Mrs. Hardross a lesson on courage."

We left Mrs. Vann giving the captain the benefit of her ideas, and assuring him that courage was a virtue peculiar to the high-born and noble. She herself had it; her father had told her she inherited it.

"Believe me, captain, there is nothing," concluded this amiable lady, "in the wide world like good birth."

"I believe it, madam," replied the captain: but his tone implied that he saw no evidence of it in her.

The next minute Mrs. Hardross, Mrs. Chaplin, and myself stood on the deck of the steamer; the good ship was rushing at great speed in the water; the waves broke in sheets of white foam; the rain and the mist had cleared away, and the moon rode clear and high in the blue heavens. We sat down in a sheltered corner, and I listened in silence while the ladies talked.

"You are so young," observed Mrs. Chaplin, her beautiful face and dark eyes lighted up with animation; "you cannot be twenty."

"I am just eighteen," said fair-haired Lau-

rie, whose heart went out to the kind-hearted woman.

"You were young to marry and undertake such a life. What was your mother thinking of?" she continued.

"My mother has been an invalid for many years," said Laurie, sadly.

"Your father is living, is he not?"

"Yes," she replied; "but he thought it best that I should be married.

"I shall not be with you very long, and perhaps may never meet you again," said Mrs. Chaplin. "Let me be a true friend to you while I am here. Poor child, you need one."

The dark eyes filled with tears.

"You are very kind," said Laurie; "I am grateful to you."

"I want to help you," observed Mrs. Chaplin, "to lose your terrible dread of the sea; your husband is always annoyed about it; and, as perhaps the greater part of your life will be spent on the ocean, only think what you will save yourself."

So I listened to the ripple of the two musical voices and the rapid rush of the waves. The last memory I have of that night is the sight of the lovely face of Laurie Stuart clear in the moonlight, all bright with emotion as she sang, in a clear, rich voice, the old song of "Annie Laurie;" and I lay down to sleep with the refrain haunting me:

"For bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and dee."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Wild Ride.

BY BLAKE PAXSON.

BEFORE Ruth Pennington accepted Dr. Howard, she had certainly flirted with Ralph Barlow, and he had some reason to be angry and indignant, but he should have been man enough to let the girl alone, and cease from absurd and unavailing reproaches.

However, he was not; and day by day, hour by hour, Ruth lived in dread of him, never knowing when she might meet his scowling face in the street, or what sweet hour he might poison life with those angry accusations, which were all the more bitter for being in a measure true.

However, Ruth's friends upheld her, for Henry Howard was a fine fellow, whose antecedents everyone knew—his father the favorite physician of the place before him, his married sister, Mrs. Marchmont, the being who dazzled their eyes with bonnets and dressed absolutely just from Paris; while old Mrs. Howard was the Lady Bountiful of the place, dispensed flannels to the poor, hunted up starving people and children going to the dogs for want of education, and gave them bread and schooling, and headed contributions for superannuated clergymen and widows who had seen better days.

A really respected family were the Howards.

Ralph Barlow was just no one knew who—a fellow who seemed to have money enough, but who for all that was without any introduction whatever.

Handsome too; but not the man people wanted to see dangling after their girls, and when Ruth had a flirtation with him, she led a terrible life at home.

No girl likes to be scolded and preached to and threatened by those who are her guardians, and doubtless this influenced Ruth no little.

Now all was smooth and easy.

Like most grave men, Dr. Howard had more in him than appeared on the surface, and made a tender and more attentive lover than she had hoped.

She loved him now; and her fleeting fancy for Ralph was quite a thing of the past.

The wedding-day was fixed; the wedding-dress nearly done and Ruth would have been perfectly happy but for Ralph's haunting.

Knowing that she had once given him reason to think she liked him—indeed, that she had—she could not use him as she would another, and complain of him to her father or brother.

The last time he crossed her path, he had caught her by the arm and held her fast, and told her that she must either break with Dr. Howard or take the consequences.

"You shall never marry him, Ruth," he said; "never."

And this time Ruth, who had before only wept and trembled, defied him.

"I am not afraid of you, Ralph," said she.

"I'll have a protector soon, who will put an end to your threats, and punish you for annoying me."

"Don't talk of him to me, girl," cried Ralph.

And he caught her by the wrist and held her so that for a moment she quite understood how powerless a woman is in the hands of a strong man, and they were alone far from any house, with thick trees on one side and a bubbling brook on the other, but he dropped the hand again and folded his arms and laughed.

"Little fool," said he.

"Great brute, to try to frighten me," she cried, and sped away.

After that she would never go far away alone.

Two days at last lay between the present and her wedding day, when, after dark, as she sat at the window after one of those calls that carried the doctor miles when he least desired it and would keep him away from her that evening, a boy ran up the garden path, and addressed her.

"You're Miss Ruth Pennington, ain't you?"

"Yes," she said, "I am."

"Then," said he, "the doctor is outside in his carriage, and he says he wants you to ride with him, only he can't leave his horse.

"Won't you put on your hat and come?" he says.

"Tell him I'll be there in a moment," said Ruth.

And she ran into the room where her mother sat.

"I'm going out to ride with Harry, ma," said she.

And catching up a hat and shawl that lay upon the lounge, she stood before the mirror to put them on.

"Nobody will see you to-night," said Mrs Pennington. "What a night for a ride—dark as pitch."

"Not on the road, ma," said Ruth, and hurried off.

But it was dark—so dark that after the streak of light from the parlor had ended, she could literally see nothing.

She found the latch of the garden gate by feeling for it, and stepped outside.

There, under the poplars, stood a dark object, a sort of silhouette of carriage, horse and driver all in one piece.

She approached it.

A hand met hers, and helped her in.

"Oh, how dark it is. I can't see you, Harry" said she.

Then the hand went around her waist, and drew her close.

It was no unwonted thing, and surely it was right for a promised wife to yield to the embrace, and nestle her head on the broad shoulder.

"I suppose it will be lighter on the road," said she.

The answer was that little unspellable sound that people use for the affirmative when they do not want to speak—and the carriage dashed away furiously.

"Why do you drive so fast Harry?" she asked, as they whirled through the village the window-lights flashing past them—as it were, each a blurred star, no more. "The horse is not running away, dear?"

The arm tightened about her, but no word was spoken.

"Why don't you say anything, Harry?" said she. "I'm frightened. Nothing has happened?"

"Nothing," was the answer, in a sort of whisper.

"But I know something has," said she. "You never behaved so before. I am trembling. Harry, feel how I tremble. I am cold all over. Harry, please speak."

Still the carriage whirled on—still there was silence.

And now the town was passed.

They were alone on a lonely road, and faster and faster still they drove on.

The thought that her betrothed lover had suddenly gone mad thrust itself like a stab into Ruth's heart.

Oh, if she could but see his face, if only for one moment.

"Harry," she said, falteringly, "Harry, won't you go back now? It is so dark. I'm tired of riding, Harry."

Suddenly he bent towards her.

"Kiss me," said he.

She lifted up her lips.

As she did so, straining her eyes towards his face, the black clouds overhead suddenly parted, and from between them peeped the moon, at her full; and Ruth saw by the white and ghastly light the face of Ralph Barlow.

It was he who sat beside her.

She understood quite well how she had been tricked.

She was miles from home, and in his power.

He had fulfilled his threat of vengeance.

"So, you are surprised," said he, with a loud laugh.

"Come, make up your mind to it. It was good enough for you once. You have kissed me before Jessie. All's fair in love and war, you know.

"I'll not make you a bad husband. I love you, my dear, or I'd never have done this. So good-bye to the doctor."

"Ralph Barlow, I hate you," cried Ruth. "If I was fool enough to like you once, I hate you now.

"You can't marry me against my will. I'll say no.

"I'll tell the minister you carried me off. What a fool you are to think a girl can be married without her own consent. Take me back at once. I'm to marry Dr. Howard on Wednesday."

"Indeed," said Ralph. "Reflect a moment.

"You will then have been away with me two days.

"I scarcely think Dr. Howard will want a wife who has been away with another man two days.

"I think by that time you will be quite willing to say Yes. Come, once you liked the notion.

"Those steady-going parents chose the doctor for you—that's all. We'll have a merry life together; plenty of money, jolly times. Come, make up your mind to it."

"Harry will think I have played him false," said Ruth.

"Harry will believe me such a wicked girl."

"Just so," said Ralph.

"And mother and father," moaned Ruth.

"Oh, Ralph, take me back home, and I'll pray for you every night of my life."

"I'd rather you'd kiss me every day," said Ralph. "No; I'll never go back with you."

Then he drove on faster than before; and though Ruth uttered scream after scream, and strove in her despair to cast herself into the road, the cries spent themselves on empty air, and the strong arm about her waist made her struggles utterly useless.

At last she ceased to cry out, and sat perfectly quiet.

It was not as Ralph supposed, that she had yielded to fate.

She was watching intently for the next house that they should pass, hoping that someone within would hear the desperate shrieks that she would utter.

At last she saw it—a square white building, in the upper windows of which a light burned brightly, for there people watched by one who suffered.

Beside the bed sat the husband, holding the hand of the wife whom he had feared that he must lose, but who was now in safety.

At the foot stood the physician ready to depart, happy in the good work that he had done.

"Good-bye until to-morrow," he said. "I think you will sleep well to-night, dear lady."

"Good-bye, Dr. Howard," said the gentleman, grasping his hand.

"I am sorry you have such a long, lonely ride before you."

Then Dr. Howard ran downstairs, and went out to his carriage.

A stout Irishman stood holding the reins.

"God bless your honor," he said. "They tell me you've saved missus's life, no less."

"With God's help I have done something," said the physician.

"Well, others are as late as I upon the road, Pat."

"Yis, and — Lord save us, what's that?"

For, as the man was about to answer, a woman leant from the little vehicle that flew past, and uttered a terrible cry of—

"Help—save me! Help—save me!"

"Is it rale throuble, or just some dissolute crayther making a disthurbance?" said Pat.

"It is real terror," said the doctor. "Come Pat—into the carriage with me and after them."

"I'm not afraid," said Pat: "but, doctor, we might get into a tough scrimmage."

"Well, you'd like that, Pat," said the doctor.

"But they say your bride is waitin' you, doctor," said Pat.

"And 'tain't a broken head you'd like to a wedding."

The doctor gave one thought to Ruth; then—

"For her sake, all women," said he and at once they were flying after the other carriage.

The chase was not long.

Their horse was fresh, the other very weary.

In fifteen minutes they were side by side.

"Who was that cried for help?" said the doctor.

A struggling form in the carriage stretched out its hands to him.

"Harry, Harry!" she cried.

"It is Ruth," shouted the doctor.

And then he had clutched the reins, and the man in the other carriage arose suddenly to his feet.

"Let go your hold," he shouted. "I am armed."

A pistol flashed in the moonlight, which shone still, though dimly.

"He will kill you, Harry," shouted out Ruth.

"Yes, by Heaven," yelled Ralph Barlow, "I will."

The Irishman, undaunted, had sprung to the horses' heads.

"I can't hold them much longer, yer honor," he cried; "they're mad—the both of them."

Then there was the sound of a pistol—a blaze—the smoke of gunpowder — Ruth fainted away.

When she recovered, Dr. Howard held her in his arms, and the Irishman stood near, rubbing his head and looking utterly bewildered.

There was no sign of either of the horses.

On the firing of the pistol both had run away, but by this time Dr. Howard was on the ground and had clutched Ruth about the waist.

They were thrown to the earth, and the bullet had grazed the doctor's cheek, and cut the ribbon of Ruth's hat in two, but otherwise they were unhurt.

The Irishman had been knocked senseless by a kick from one of the horses, and what had become of Ralph Barlow was not known.

A few hours afterwards he was found dead amongst the debris of his carriage, his dead horse beside him at the foot of a precipice past which the road wound half a mile further on.

Poor Ruth, conscience-stricken and shaken in every nerve, really felt as though it would be wrong that she should play the role of bride so soon.

But the doctor stood firm and claimed her on the proper day, and her wild ride through the night, and the terrible scene that followed it, seems almost a dream to her now when she recalls it.

Only no daughter of Ruth Howard's will ever flirt, if she can help it.

Flirtation, says Ruth, is nothing less than a crime.

A YOUNG lady having "set her cap" for a rather large specimen of the opposite sex, and having failed to win him, was telling her sorrow to a couple of her confidants, when one of them confronted her with these words—"Never mind, Mollie; there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught." "Mollie knows that," replied her little brother; "but she wanted a whale."

Bric-a-Brac.

OUR SIZE.—According to the last census the total miles of the United States and the territories, not including Alaska, is 2,970,000. Of the States, Texas has the largest area, 262, 290 square miles, and Rhode Island the smallest, 1,085 square miles, so that the former would make 241 of the latter and have 805 square miles over. But Rhode Island is ahead of all others in density of population, having 254 persons to the square mile.

FOR A DEBATING SOCIETY.—There were a hundred ears of corn in a barn. A greedy rat carried them all off to his nest, taking along three ears every time he left the barn. How many visits did he have to make to get the hundred ears? The president of the society answered, "Thirty-four visits;" but the secretary said, that inasmuch as two of the ears the rat took away with him every visit were his own ears, he must have made a hundred visits.

A LOVE CHARM.—A young wife who thought she was losing her husband's affection went to a seventh daughter of a seventh daughter for a love powder. The mystery-woman told her: "Get a raw piece of beef, cut flat, about half an inch thick. Slice an onion in two and rub the meat on both sides with it. Put on pepper and salt, and toast it on each side over a red coal fire. Drop on it three lumps of butter and two sprigs of parsley, and get him to eat it." The young wife did so, and her husband loved her ever after.

A MYSTERY.—The other afternoon the Mayor of Vienna was accosted by a servant who gave him a parcel containing two smaller sealed packets. To one was fixed a letter informing the Mayor that the packet contained 100,000 florins, which he might immediately devote to any charitable institution of which he considered Vienna to be in the most urgent need. To the second packet was fixed a fragment of visiting card. The Mayor is to keep it unopened until 1890, when he is to give it to whomsoever presents the missing fragment of the card. If no one presents himself, or no communications are received, the contents of the second packet are to be devoted to some charitable institution.

THE BEGGARS' BALL.—A correspondent writes from Paris: "But of all the balls, the most curious are the beggars' balls. Notwithstanding the troubles and trials they have to endure through the day when evening comes they dance, and are as happy and merry as though they were rich and perfectly free. They have their balls, and meet for pleasure three times a week; and, contrary to the general belief, they are reported to be exceedingly moderate in eating and drinking, even those whose pockets are well filled with pennies gathered during the day. The medley of blind, lame, paralyzed, one-armed and deformed persons at these balls, is one of the sights of Paris."

THE SKATERS CORPS.—Perhaps the most curious battalion in any army is the Norwegian Corps of Skaters. These corps are composed of picked men armed with rifles, which they use with great precision. The skates used are admirably adapted for traveling over rough and broken ice and frozen snow, being six inches broad and between nine and ten inches long. The soldiers can be manœuvred upon ice or over the snowfields of the mountains with a rapidity equal to that of the best trained cavalry. As an instance of the speed they can go, it is stated that a messenger attached to the corps has accomplished 120 miles in eighteen hours and a half, over mountainous country.

GAMBLING AND SUICIDE.—At Monte Carlo it is the custom to fill the pocket of suicides with bank-notes, so that it may be seen that they did not kill themselves on account of losses. A recent letter from there relates how a presumably dead Irishman succeeded in getting his pockets filled a short time ago. After losing a small sum at the gambling tables he suddenly jumped up, exclaimed, "I am ruined!" and rushed into the gardens. Almost immediately afterward the guards heard a pistol shot and then a cry of pain, and, rushing to the spot, found the Irishman dead. It was dark, with no one around, so they filled his pockets with money and left him to be discovered in the morning. They had scarcely gone out of sight, however, before the Irishman was on his feet again, and skipping away in the most lively style.

THE TRAPPISTS.—Writing of the Trappists at Gethsemane, Ky., a correspondent says: "'When a monk dies no useless coffin incloses his breast,' but, wrapped in his circular, with his cowl drawn over his head as in life, he is buried. Each grave is covered with myrtle and has a black wooden cross bearing the name of the cell's dusty inmate. At the foot of each grave is a little stool, where the father who conducts you kneels to pray for the soul of the departed. At the end of the row is a new, open grave, which will receive the next body, and which constantly helps the father to 'remember death.' There are no qualifications for the Trappist order. Any man who will obey rules may stay seven years, giving his labor to the community and his thoughts to God, and, if he does not like it then, may withdraw. If he concludes to stay he takes the perpetual vow. The sin-sick and the weary are all here. Few desert, while many have been for years buried to the world and all its little convulsions. Some of them do not know who is president, and the echo of Guiteau's pistol shot died at the outer walls. The abbey contains a fine library of religious works, among which is a Bible printed at Lyons in 1432."

MOTHER LOVE.

No love like the love of a mother
When trials are gathering fast—
Though fond is the care of a brother,
Sometimes it will fail at the last.
Should you turn from the pathway of duty,
A sister's affection may fade;
But mother-love shows its best beauty,
When her child to sin is betrayed.

A father may speak stern and coldly
If his son has wandered astray;
But mother will stand forward boldly
And help him regain the lost way,
And speak to him kindly, in warning,
With just as tender a tone
As she did in childhood's pure morning,
Ere sorrow and crime he had known.

Ah, no! there's no love like a mother's
So noble, forgiving and true;
We may trust to many another's
And value it, that it is new,
To find, when life's sun is shrouded,
And our pathway enters the gloom,
Their love for us, too, will be clouded,
While hers follows us to the tomb.

LADY LINTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE," "BARBARA GRAHAM," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

LADY LINTON'S DIARY CONTINUED.

IT WAS a lovely morning when we left Cherbourg. A light breeze favored us, and the motion of the sea was not too great to allow of our sitting on the deck or moving about with ease.

After a glance behind us had assured him that we were still followed, my husband set our chairs to face the bow of the boat, and seated himself with a sombre expression of determination in his face, as though he had resolved to think of the yacht no more. He was unhappy—I could see that.

It was with difficulty that he found matter for conversation.

For my part, I felt so grieved to think that he suffered, and so perplexed to understand why he took the matter so deeply to heart, that I was even more silent than he. It was a great relief when he proposed that I should read to him.

"Anything will do. It doesn't matter what words go to the music of your voice," he said.

He put his hand into his pocket and drew out a volume.

"Ah, here's the Autocrat! That's pleasant reading at all times."

I read. I knew that his eyes were upon me, and that made me happy.

I don't think I gave much attention to the matter; my only care was to look out for the marks of punctuation.

Now and then I looked up and encountered the soft sweet gleam of his gentle eyes; when I had found my place again, and subdued the fluttering of my heart, I continued.

I was holding the book in my right hand and he took my left hand from my lap and held it in his.

That made me stop again, and seeing happiness and love on his dear face, the tears started to my eyes—such joy was in my heart to think I was a comfort to him.

I held out my hand to be kissed, and after a tender little embrace, I composed my feelings as well as I could and went on again.

He still held my hand, and I went on reading, though my arm ached with holding the book so long in one position.

I wouldn't for the world take my hand from his, though I perceived after a while, that his thoughts strayed from me, and he perhaps was unconscious that he held it.

My arm seemed to hang like a heavy leaden weight from my shoulder; there was a piercing sensation in my wrist and fingers, and this was followed by a numbness, while the pain in my shoulder grew so intolerable that at length I was forced to alter my position so that I could have the book on my knees and read it.

He did not notice the movement, but still held my hand.

And now I continued for a long while, and did not pause until my back ached and my head grew dizzy with being bent down. Then I had to change my position again.

"Go on, Gertie, unless you are tired," he said. "You can't tell how sweet your voice is."

That gave me new life, and I forgot all about my stupid little aches and pains.

It was only the sound of my voice he heard, for when I asked him to explain a line of Greek that brought me to a stand, he turned abruptly, as if he had been awakened from a sleep, and asked me what it was I said.

It was time for dinner when we reached St. Malo. I had read, with very few pauses, since luncheon, and neither of us had ever looked at the ship behind us; yet I feel sure it had been in his thoughts, and I know it had occupied my mind far more than *The Autocrat at the breakfast-table*.

What had taken place during my expedition through Cherbourg?

My fears took a rather absurd form, yet not an unnatural one, perhaps. I dreaded lest my husband, in his interview with the people on board the yacht, had lost his temper and challenged some one to fight.

I could only by this wild supposition explain his distress.

I thought that possibly he was wondering what would become of me if he fell. I know now that it was excessively stupid to imagine such a possibility.

When I came upon deck, after making my toilet, I found my husband standing with his arms folded and his chin upon his breast, looking at the yacht, our enemy, which was stationed so near that I could almost distinguish the features of the men moving upon it.

"What is it, darling?" I said, slipping my hand under his hand.

"Ah! You there, Gertie?" he said, turning to me.

He took my two hands in his, and held me at a little distance from him, looking at me with great love.

"Have I ever seen you in that dress before?" he asked.

"Yes, two or three times."

"Then it is you who improve, and not your dress, for I never saw you look so pretty before;" and he drew me to him, and lifted me off my feet in his embrace.

"What should I do without you?" he murmured.

"And what should I do without you?" I echoed.

"Ah," said he, putting me down, and moving towards the side of the ship, his arm around my waist, "that is a question! What do you think would become of you without me?"

I detected, or thought I detected a serious thought under the pleasantry, and at once my imagination flew to that absurd possibility of an impending duel. It seemed to me that he was still calculating upon the chance of being separated from me forever. I could not move—a tremor seized me, I looked up at him in speechless terror.

"Why, Gertie," he exclaimed, catching me closer with his strong arms, "do you think I had a serious meaning in the question?"

"Tell me you had not, dear," I said.

"You sweet soul! Would I let anything on earth part us now that I have made you mine?"

"Tell me that—only tell me that!"

"I will now, if you like."

"You will let nothing tempt you to—to—to jeopardise your life?"

"Why, what do you mean, you poor fluttering dove?"

"You are not going to fight anyone?"

"Now you puzzle me more than ever. What can you be thinking about, Gertie?"

"You went to see the linendraper last night, while I was in the town, and I thought perhaps——"

He burst into a loud laugh, and happily there was no need for me to finish my faltering sentence.

"You're right in one respect," he said. "I did go on board that confounded boat last night, but there was no linendraper to fight—more's the pity perhaps. But how came you to think of such an unlikely thing?"

"It seemed to me that you were thinking to day what would become of me if—if——" I could not continue.

He looked at me with wondering gravity.

"Good Heaven! Who would suspect you had it in you?" he said, in a low tone that was not addressed to my ear; then, in a changed voice and a lighter air, he added, "Appease your troubled spirit, sweet; I shall not fight, and no power that is shall separate us in this world." He kissed me passionately again and again; I clung to him in the utmost happiness that any soul can feel.

I suppose there was no one upon deck, or near enough to see us, or he would not have taken me in his arms at first; yet had all the world been looking on, I should have been unconscious of them, all my faculties being so completely centered upon him I loved.

He led me up and down the deck—I had regained my strength—and as we walked, he spoke.

"I have been upset, and felt uncomfortable a good deal, Gertie, I admit," he said. "Perhaps my depression results from too much happiness, perhaps the state of my digestion makes me morbidly sensitive. Whatever the primal cause may be, the confounded yacht over there, following us about in this insane fashion, worries me beyond endurance.

"The sea makes me superstitious; it has that effect upon many men, you know."

"Then why should we stay on the sea if it makes you unhappy?" I asked.

"That's just what I was thinking of talking to you about, dear.

"I thought that perhaps if I went to Paris for a week I might shake off this stupid feeling."

He spoke with embarrassment—not at all in his usual manner, but as if he were ashamed to own his own weakness, and his yielding to it.

"We will start this very moment," I said.

"I wish you would raise some objection, Gertie, so that I might play the hero by overcoming my own inclination, or the tyrant by overcoming yours, or any part rather than this of a sneaking coward."

"Oh, Gilbert?"

He regarded me with a strange expression on his face; I could not tell whether he pitied or admired me.

"Tell me," he said, "that you have grown tired of the sea, and that you would be delighted to abandon the plan we made for a cruise of six weeks."

He must have read my thoughts, for indeed what he bade me tell him was in my mind. But I feared now to say so, lest he should think me a fool to change so quickly.

"Tell me," he continued harshly, "that you would rather by half dwell in a noisy city than drift along the sunny coast."

"The sweetest place in all the world is where I see you happy," I said.

The harshness was no longer on his face when he spoke again, but only the expression of love unalloyed.

"What a big soul you have, little sweetheart!" he said. "Will you always love me so fully, I wonder?"

I nodded with confidence and joy, and kissed his shoulder, which was near my lips.

We were gay at dinner; he talked about Paris, which seemed to be not at all a murky city from his description, and I became quite eager to see the Champs Elysees and the Boulevards, and the wonderful shops.

"When shall we start?" I asked.

"To-night, if we succeed in shaking off the enemy."

"I had better pack up my things directly after dinner, then."

"Oh, no; a valise would betray us! We have to make our escape, you know. What is indispensable you must put on your back, or I will put it in my pocket. The rest can be bought in Paris.

"By-the-by, have you any strong affection for that dress?"

"No."

"Good! Now look up another that you like better to take with you. I shall want you to change your dress when we get on shore, and let me have that you wear now. That astonishes you, Gertie—eh?" he asked, laughing at my perplexity.

"Ah, you have yet to see the subtle side of my character!"

"Shall I have to change my hat as well?" I asked.

"Yes. I didn't think of that. If you can find a veil, so much the better."

I did as he desired; and he put the dress and hat I had selected into the canvas bag with which Peter used to fetch the stores from the shore. Then, when I had finished all my preparations for departure, we left the dear old ship in a small boat, Peter rowing us to the land.

It was still light, and, before we reached the shore, I perceived that a small boat had put off from "the enemy."

The distance between us was great, yet I fancied that I could see a woman's figure in the boat.

Gilbert saw the boat also, and as we landed he said—

"Go to the big hotel over there, Gertie; Peter shall accompany you. I will be with you in a little while."

He then walked away to that point which "the enemy's" boat was making for, while I, with an uneasy feeling of apprehension, went, attended by Peter, to the hotel.

It was some time before Gilbert arrived. It was no longer light; the lamps were lit in the street.

"Have you changed your dress, Gertie?" he asked.

"Yes; here are the things."

"Good. We shall want them presently."

He thrust his hands into his pockets, went to the window, and looked down into the court-yard of the hotel.

He took no notice of me. Suddenly he drew in his head, and said, in a tone of relief—

"Ah, here they are."

Then he went to the door and held it open. Shortly afterwards Peter came into the room, followed by Hutchins, the man who served as servant on board the Tub, and Joe, the cook's boy, both on the broad grin. Peter carried a bundle under his arm.

"Here are the things," said my husband, pointing to my dress; "take them into the next room. Come with me, Gertie."

We went down to the dining-room. Gilbert made the *garcon* bring some Chartreuse and the bill. His silence and obvious inquietude frightened me.

"It's nearly all over," he said in a reassuring tone, as he pressed my hand.

He paid the *garcon*, giving him rather more for himself than the bill amounted to, then we went up-stairs again.

There was a good deal of giggling and suppressed laughter audible as we drew near the room, and on opening the door, I perceived, to my amazement, Peter arranging my bonnet on the head of a young woman, and a gentleman with a beard like my husband's helping with his advice; but, as I soon found, the lady was only the cook's boy, Joe, in my dress, and the gentleman was Hutchins in my husband's jacket, with a false beard—which, as I was told afterwards, they had had much difficulty in finding.

It was laughable to see Joe take Hutchins' arm and lean towards him, as I suppose he had often seen me do, and the men seemed to think it was a fine joke. Only Gilbert looked angry and stern.

"Oblige me by remembering that I am here," he said. "Come, Peter, look sharp."

There was no more tittering after that. Peter stuffed Hutchins' and Joe's jackets into the canvas bag, and, having touched his little black ringlet to us, went down-stairs.

Two minutes afterwards, Hutchins, with Joe on his arm, followed.

My husband had thrown himself into a chair with his back to the men, and sat in gloomy silence. When they were gone, I went to him and put my hand on his shoulder, and said—

"They are gone—it's all right now, dear."

"Thank Heaven!" he murmured, drawing me down upon his knee and kissing me.

We waited only a few minutes, then he lifted me, and rose to his feet.

"Come along, Gertie; we'll go and see if the dodge has succeeded. If it has, we'll breathe again, and to-morrow we'll *fete* our escape with the best luncheon we can get in Paris."

At that moment the *garcon* opened the door, and, seeing us, stopped short in bewilderment. Then, with stuttering apologies, he explained that he thought he had seen us leave the hotel five minutes before.

"So much the better," said Gilbert.

CHAPTER XVII.

LADY LINTON'S DIARY CONTINUED.

WE went down to the quay; it was deserted. The night seemed less dark there than in the town, where the gas was lit.

A faint gray light like a mist hung over the sea; the anchored boats near at hand looked like flickering shadows as they rocked to and fro on the waves. Further away were a few lights slowly moving—they were fishing boats going out with the tide, Gilbert told me.

He could see more clearly than I could, and he understood the position of the quays, the rocks, and the landing-places, which so stupefied me that I could not recognise even the place where we had landed a couple of hours before.

We walked along the quay to a point where it turned at an angle, and there were a few yards of iron rail set up as a protection.

There we stopped, and leaning on the rail looked over the waters in silence. I knew that he could distinguish among the distant lights those of our ship, though I could not, and I shared the anxiety I was sure he felt; and my eyes went from one light to another, eager to detect the first movement. For quite a quarter of an hour we watched them, then—

"One is moving, is it not dear?" I whispered.

"Yes," he answered, nodding. "You may bid the Tub adieu; now for the other."

We were silent again. The lights of our boat moved farther and farther away, and still the others remained stationary.

A fear lest the ruse had failed began to creep over my mind, and I watched more strenuously than before.

"Ah!" Gilbert exclaimed suddenly, in a tone of relief, "do you see, Gertie?"

I hesitated a moment, then I felt sure, and pointed to another double light that was moving from its position.

"That's it. The enemies are gone—and a pretty voyage Peter is likely to lead them. Now for Paris, my Gertie, and a cloudless continuation of our honeymoon."

Saying that, he caught me up in his arms and kissed me with an excess of gaiety which showed how greatly his heart was relieved.

"Yes," said he, turning to take a last look at the lights, "they're fairly off, and all we have to do is to forget them."

Then we turned our backs on the sea, and walked across the port to the Grand Rue.

On our way he said, after a little silence—

"You've asked scarcely any questions about the 'enemy,' Gertie, though I dare say the subject has been pretty constantly in your mind lately.

"If there is anything you'd like to know, anything you'd like to have explained, you know, better have it out at once, so that we may talk it to death, and bury it forever."

"I think you would have told me anything you wished me to know, and I want to know no more than that," said I.

And so, with one accord, we despatched the subject from our thoughts—or at least from our conversation—and have not once referred to it since.

We stayed in Paris ten days, and I think we went everywhere and saw everything—at any rate, on the evening, I hoped so.

On that evening, as we sat outside a *cafe* by the Madeleine, we counted twenty-four van-loads of Cook's tourists, returning from Versailles, pass by; and then Gilbert said—

"I think there'd be enough of our compatriots in Paris without us, don't you, Gertie?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Would you like to go to Fontainebleau?"

"Very much, if—if there isn't too much to see."

"Oh, hang the palace! I'm thinking of the forest. It would be a pleasant change to see a few respectable trees."

"Lovely!"

"Then we'll start to-morrow."

I gave his hand a little pinch without being seen, to let him know how pleased I was.

The next day we left Paris and went to Thomery, which is the second station beyond Fontainebleau—quite in the heart of the forest, with not a house near; and, oh how delightful it was to breathe the pure air and walk in the chequered shade of the great trees, holding my dear husband's hand, without any fear of being seen.

The country reminded me a little of some parts of Neufbourg, only that the trees were much finer, and the paths were not encumbered with great rocks, but beautifully kept and quite pleasant to walk along, and, after we had walked some distance, we came to a hill covered with gardens, each with a long wall covered with vines, and at the foot lay a village bordering the river, from which upon the other side rose a great hill covered with oaks and firs, broken here and there by a crag of gray rock.

It did us good to see the water again; and indeed I do not know who could regard without delight the beautiful broad river sweeping in a majestic course between the noble wooded hills, and presenting a perfect crescent to the eye.

We followed the course of the river, keeping close to the water, yet under the shade of the trees, and when we were tired

we sat down, and Gilbert smoked a pipe while I arranged a bouquet with the wild flowers we had plucked on the way.

"Jupiter, there's a fine jack!" said Gilbert; and he pointed through the reeds to a big fish with a long nose that lay perfectly still amongst the stems of some lily-leaves. "And look at the roach out there! They look as if they'd never seen such a thing as a rod and line. One might be very lazy and very happy here, I should think."

I agreed with him; that was only natural, his suggestion being so pleasant.

"With a boat for the river—an English boat, Gertie, not one of those barges we saw at Thomery—a comfortable house with just a glimpse of the water, and enough ground about it to support a cow and some poultry, so that we could laugh at the irregularity of the local butcher, and stabling for a pony-chaise or two——"

I didn't at that time know what cobs were, but the picture drew was so enchanting without them that I let my bouquet fall into my lap, and could think of nothing but the pleasure of living in such a place.

"Go on, dear," I said, when he stopped.

"Well, said he, laughing, "I can think of nothing to add to the attraction of such a dwelling, except a graceful little lady, daintily dressed, piquant in the matter of silk stockings and Louis Quinze shoes"—I drew my feet under me—"to welcome a fellow's return from a day's fishing.

"Do you like the picture, lady?"

"Oh, it's ten thousand times better than the Lake of Como picture!" I said.

"And, when you changed your clothes and got rid of your fish, dinner should be served—served as well as it could be served with flowers on the table, and the wine you like quite ready, and the linen and glass as white and bright as possible, and a fire burning on the hearth when the evenings grow cold—not a cinder fire such as they have in London, but bright blazing logs, clean and sweet-smelling."

"Oh, yes," said he, "the only difficulty is where to put our little ducks;" and he looked up at the hills despairingly.

There was one chateau in sight, but that seemed too large and fine for our requirements; besides which, it was clearly not to let, and there was no other house in sight.

"After all," I said, with a sigh, "there is no harm in supposing."

"Not a bit. It would be more delightful, though, to realize our dream.

"Here comes a fellow with a *hotte* on his back; I'll tackle him on the subject. If I mix my tenses very unintelligibly, come to my assistance, Gertie."

When the peasant came up, Gilbert spoke to him, and at once went to the point by asking if knew of a house to let.

The peasant shook his head. One must go to Fontainebleau for a house, he said; there were not enough in the country for those who had to work in the fields; and, if one was to let, it was snapped up at once, despite the rents which were so high—ah, so dear—so dear that one could with difficulty find anything nice at two hundred francs a year!

"Two hundred francs a year won't do for us," said Gilbert. "What's 'haunted chateau' in French, Gertie? Ask him if there isn't anything of the sort to be had; an old farm-house would do."

I explained to the peasant, who had set down his *hotte* and seemed well disposed to enter into the affair, the kind of house that would suit us; and he, after describing a number of residences that we could not have, and which would certainly not suit us if we could, suddenly recollected that there was a house within a kilometre which was just our affair.

It was not a farm-house, to be sure, nor was it old; but it had grounds about it where a dozen cows might be kept, and the garden abutted upon the very path we were pursuing.

It had been bought, decorated and furnished by a Parisian last year, who had been compelled to sell it then, and Madame Musson of Valvins kept the keys.

We had only to follow the path for three kilometres, and on our way we should see the "*bonbonniere*," and be able to determine whether we should like to live in it.

To my mind the house was charming, standing in the midst of a beautiful garden, with a smooth green lawn sloping up to the great bay-window that occupies nearly the whole of one side, and a hill behind it covered with fir trees, and nothing but a line of poplars to intercept the splendid view of the river and the hills opposite.

I looked up at my husband's face, to see if he liked it as well as I did.

"Gas, Gertie," he said, in a tone of objection.

There was a handsomely-gilt lamp on each side of the *perron* at the front of the house.

"We need not light it, dear, said I.

"That's true; and I suppose the lamps could be rooted up.

"The silver globes on the lawn might also be got rid of; then the place would seem less like a casino, and a little more like a habitable home.

"The grounds stretch a good long way apparently—plenty of room for your little ducks, and flights of steps along there for them to come down to the river when they're thirsty."

"That would be convenient when we wanted to go to the boat; and see, dear, there's another flight of steps down to the water.

"You would'nt have far to go to fish, would you?"

"Not if the ducks are reasonably quiet. You seem to like the look of it."

"Oh, I think it's lovely! Up there under the verandah is just the place where I should sit and look out when it was time for you to come home, and through the open windows behind I fancy you could see the silver and glass sparkling on the table.

"Wouldn't that be nice if you felt hungry?"

"Gertie, we'll have that house, if money can buy it."

But it was to let.

Madame Masson said the proprietor would be only too glad to find a purchaser who would take the furniture as the house.

And she went with us all the rooms, throwing back the persiennes that we might see the beautiful view outside, and the elegance and luxury of the apartments within.

It seemed all too exquisite for me—the furniture and apartments surpassed in beauty anything I had ever seen or imagined.

It fairly bewilders me to think of the painting and gilding, the plush and velvet and lace, the marqueterie and ebony, the pictures and statuettes and consoles, crowded with lovely little knick-knacks, the carpets and furs and beautifully-parqueted floors, and the portieres and lovely little screens to the fireplace.

Then the quantity of linen neatly stored in armoires, and crystal and porcelain, and the arrangements for warming the vestibule and staircases.

While Madame Masson was showing me the kitchens, Gibert strolled away to explore another part of the house.

"There's a very good den at the back, with a capital billiard-table," said he, when he returned.

"There's everything, I think," said I.

"And you think it will do?"

"If it isn't more than we ought to have."

"More than you ought to have, Gertie!

"Do you consider gold too good for the gem that is set in it?"

* * * * * *

And now he has gone to Paris with the notary from Fontainebleau to conclude to purchase of the beautiful house which is to be our home.

He went this morning, leaving me in this little house at Valvins.

I have been writing nearly the whole day, and my fingers ache.

Otherwise I think I could find yet more to tell of the happy days which have passed since I left dear old Mrs. Simpson at Kennington.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM Mr. Pierce, Monkden, to Mrs. Pierce, Fontainebleau—

"The Swan Inn, near Monkden, Berks.
"Sunday night.

"Dear Eliza,—I followed your instructions with the utmost promptitude, starting for Marlow by the 4.35 on the day I received your long and most satisfactory letter.

"I locked up the office, and left a note with the housekeeper, to be given to Mrs. Gower when she called the next morning, thus avoiding a meeting with the lady and the cross-examination to which she would surely have subjected me.

"You can't tell how much easier I felt in my mind after reading your ample explanation.

"I quite agree with all you say, and have not once thought of the roadside inn since reading your express dislike to the notion.

"I took my fishing-tackle, as you suggested—though where you put my fly-book when you turned out my cupboard in the spring I could not discover—and arrived at Marlow without accident, though I nearly lost my top-joint in jumping out of the carriage.

"I went at once to Monkden, determined to lose no time in making inquries, and found this inn, which is very comfortable, and not over-dear.

"After a meat-tea, I had a chat with the host, who is a first-rate fisherman, and I arranged with him to bait over-night a run which seems to swarm with fine roach. I thought about Sophia Kirby, as you desired but somehow the conversation didn't get beyond fishing.

"I had glorious sport the next day, but regret to say found no one to talk to upon the subject of the Linton murder.

"In the evening there was a very agreeable sort of free-and-easy in the perlor; but the singing did not allow me to broach the subject of S. K.

"I sang 'The heart bowed down,' 'Hot Codlings,' and 'The Death of Nelson,' and was encored for each one.

"So far, I am sorry to say, my inquiry was fruitless.

"The next day I nearly caught one of the finest perch I ever saw.

"Friday, thirty-two roach.

"Saturday, not much, but a chub weighing nine and three-quarter ounces, and the best I ever tasted.

"I did not neglect business, my dear, although enjoying myself uncommonly, as you may suppose from the fact that last night—Saturday—when I observed in a casual way that it wasn't such a day as this which Sir Gilbert Linton's wife was drowned, one of the customers cried, 'Why, guv'nor, you seem t' got that there murder on your brain!'

"Perceiving that I must be more guarded in my approaches, and being anxious to send you a good report of progress, I went for a walk this evening instead of going to church, and succeeded in making a discovery which I think you will admit reflects credit on my ingenuity and perseverance.

"Coming to an inn, the 'Chub and Float,' if I remember rightly—which lies on the farther side of Monkden, about a mile below the Abbey, I found five or six village worthies seated in the arbor, and smoking. I called for a clay pipe and some ale, and fell into conversation with a fellow in his shirt-sleeves, who evidently knew every one there.

"A showy young woman brought the ale that I called for.

"As she went away I looked after her with a kind of puzzled look, and said I to my new acquaintance—

"'Dear me, it's odd!'

"'What's odd?" inquired he.

"'Why, I seem to know the look of that young woman's face!' said I.

"'That's not unlikely," said he, 'if you've been in the habit of visiting these parts.'

"'Ah, to be sure!' said I. 'Now I know. I must have seen her at the Abbey.'

"'The deuce you have! When?'

"'Oh, some time ago! Her name's Sophia Kirby, isn't it?"

"'No, that it ain't,' said he. 'And I'm not particularly obliged to you for finding any likeness betweeen the two, seeing as that's my wife, and Sophy Kirby's about as for a hussy as ever lived.'

"This rather took me aback, for I had no notion the man was the inn-keeper or the young woman his wife; however, I did not lose my presence of mind, but made the best apologies I could, and assured him that, when I was at the Abbey, a good time ago, I had heard Sir Gilbert speak in high terms of his mistress's maid.

"'No offence, I hope?' said I.

"'Oh, none where none is meant!' he replied, shaking my hand.

"'What you say about Sir Gilbert's praising of Sophy is like enough, seeing as she was something more to him than a maid.'

"'How's that?'

"'Better ask your friend Sir Gilbert,' said he drily.

"'Oh, Sir Gilbert's no friend of mine!' said I.

"'I only went to the Abbey for a few days to look into some accounts which had got into a muddle.

"It struck me that the master seemed to be on pretty friendly terms with the young woman; that's how I came to notice her.'

"'Friendly terms—ah, I should say they was!'

"'Why, you don't mean to say that his wife's maid was——'

"'She was, though, according to all accounts,' he said, nodding his head significantly.

"'I aint afeard of speaking now, because it ain't likely as the Baronet 'll ever show his face again in these parts; and, if so be I hadn't been afeard of losing my license—which a landlord can never be too particular—I might have spoke afore to a pretty tune.

"'I suppose you know there were a murder up there?'

"'A murder!' said I, looking thunderstruck.

"'The jury acquitted of him and let him off,' he said, in conclusion; 'but, if I'd been on the jury, they might have starved me to death before ever I'd 'a' jined in that verdict—perviding I wasn't afraid of losing my license, you understand.'

"'Why, how's that?

"'The evidence seemed too clear him, at all events.'

"'Yes, and I durnay if you see a angler going home with the grass poking out of his basket you'd think it was full o' fish, wouldn't you?

"'I know better'an that. What's evidence but so much grass as can be got for the pulling and just serves to hide the hollow truth and gull the public?

"'I tell you, sir, that Sophy Kirby was the mistress of that house.

"'Not a servant in the place could contrary her.

"'The housekeeper wouldn't stay in the house with her.

"'It was her as had that poor ill Lady Linton locked up as if she was a lunatick or a thief—it was her who domineered over everybody.

"'And why did Sir Gilbert permit her to domineer over every one and maultreat his wife?

"'Because, sir, she was his mumsy. This was the house of call for his gardener, his hostler, and his butler, and they all told me the same story.

"'Now, sir, tell me this—why did Sir Gilbert say nothing of the disappearance of Sophia Kirby and Barton at the time of his wife's disappearance, when people were dragging the river for the body and his mother-in-law, who suspected the truth from the very first, was letting all the world know her suspicions of this murder?

"'Why, sir, it was to give Sophy Kirby time to get out of the country with the jewels that were Lady Linton's private property and establish herself before the facts came out!

"'I tell you for a truth, Sir Gilbert and that woman together did the murder, and it was a schemed job from beginning to end, and every one knows it.

"'He stayed till it got too warn for him, and then he bolted, and now he's living in Canady with Sophy Kirby.'

"'How do you know that?' I asked.

"'From a gent who saw 'em there only the week afore last.'

"I hinted that the gentleman must have travelled with great speed.

"'Be that as it may,' he retorted, 'it stands to reason they're together some'eres.

"'It ain't likely that a woman like Sophy Kirby would let such a catch as Sir Gilbert slip when she'd got him on her line.

"'If he didn't go to her of his own free will, which is likely enough he did, seeing as absence makes the heart grow fonder, as the song says, she could make him come to her by threatening to go to him.'

"'She couldn't do this without risking apprehension.'

"There's no saying what a woman won't risk to get a man as she thinks is trying to get away from her—not as I allow that he did try to get away from her.

"'But any way you may lay your life on this, sir—there ain't a woman in the world of that sort who would let a man as had been her lover and her accomplice in guilt slip out of her hands while there was anything to be wrung out of him; and whether they're in Canady or elsewhere don't matter a jack-straw—they're together some'eres.'

"A man taking a seat at our table put an end to our conversation, which I have set down exactly as I can.

"You will see, Eliza, that the innkeeper's tale agrees in many respects with suspicions, and with certain events revealed in the extracts from Lady Linton's diary which you have forwarded during the week.

"It quite alters the aspect of the case; and I am grateful to think that our inquiry is likely to result in a discovery which must justify your expectations and raise us to an honorable position, unless you write to the contrary.

"I shall continue my inquiries here, and see if anything of further importance is to be pumped out of the man at the 'Club and Float.'

"I have sent your enclosures to Mrs .G., who must be thoroughly satisfied now, not only with the quantity of matter you have sent lately, but with the conclusive nature of the information it contains.

"'Hoping that you are in good health, and that the weather with you is as fine as it is with us,

"Jos. Pierce."

From Mrs. Pierce, Fontainebleau, to Mr. Pierce, Marlow—

"Valvins, Fontainebleau.

"Dear Pierce—The information you have received may be useful.

"By all means continue your inquiring at Monkden.

"We must not be hampered by any interference from Mrs. G., and the less you see of her at this time the better.

"If she writes, asking for information, reply, as briefly and as business-like style as possible, that at the present stage of the inquiry our proceedings cannot be made known even to her, success being dependant upon absolute secrecy.

"Obtain all the information that is to be had relative to Sophy Kirby and the position she held at Monkden Abbey, but be careful not to arouse suspicion by being over-anxious.

"We must know more about John Barton, whose part in the tragedy seems to be ignored.

"When you have heard a statement, discover to the best of your ability whether the person from whom you had it is trustworthy or a liar.

"I shall not trouble myself to make any more extracts from Lady Linton's diary at present, which, from the day of her arrival here up to the present moment, contains nothing but the account of every-day doings that are perfectly unimportant to us.

"Sir Gilbert and his wife have hardly any acquaintance here—the chateaux are empty until the end of the Paris season, and the rest of the world are of a very common kind.

"Sir Gilbert shoots and hunts a little, and has brought a few men to dinner; but they seem awed by the magnificence and luxury of the house, which they had little reason to expect from the unpretentious simple manners of Sir G.

"Occasionally Sir G. and Lady L. go to Paris for the opera or a play, leaving here one day and returning the next.

"They are as perfectly happy together as any two people can be.

"Sir G. loves his wife passionately—and more than that.

"This is not surprising, for little Lady Linton is the most sweet and beautiful young woman I have ever encountered, and quite the lady.

"Her whole thought seems to be of him, and every action is shaped with a view to his happiness.

"And yet she is not slavish in her love—if you understand what I mean.

"She has her own opinions—and very strong and clear ones they are too—of right and wrong; and I am sure she would not go from her principles even to please her husband; but she has no reason to oppose him, for he, either by her leading or out of his great love for her, always sees things in the same light as she.

"But I can see that, happy as they are together, there is anxiety in the bottom of their hearts—a fear on his part which he dares not reveal—a depression in her mind which she could not explain.

"His love is greater than is natural even in a good husband for a good wife—and we know why.

"I have seen an expression on his face exactly like that which poor Tom had when the doctor told him Charlotte couldn't live a week.

"Don't you remember? He knows that, if that woman finds him, there will be an end to his wife's happiness and his.

"Lady L., detects the terrible anxiety that underlies his happiness, and, without knowing the cause of it, is troubled.

"All this, Joe, shows that we are on the right scent.

"As I said, the diary contains nothing but a description of happy days, of trips on the river, of rambles in the forest, of visits to Paris, and the beautiful presents he makes her.

"Their happiness is further increased by the fact that Lady L. is going to be a mother

before long. If I send any extracts, it will be merely to keep Mr. G. quiet.

"Now, Joe, the time has come for action. The first thing is to prove whether the woman on the yacht which pursued Sir Gilbert and his lady from Dover to St. Malo is Sophy Kirby or not.

"There is no doubt in my mind that it was she, and that in the interview Sir Gilbert had at Cherbourg she refused to accept his bribes.

"The diary shows us that John Barton knew of Sir G's attachment for Miss Graham.

"For his own purposes, he would excite Sophy Kirby's jealousy.

"If John Barton were in love with her, he would naturally be piqued by her love for his master.

"Possibly he was in communication with one of the servants at the Abbey, and heard of Miss Graham's visit to Sir G.

"He knew all about Sir Gilbert's yacht, and indirectly learnt through Peter of his intention to make a cruise.

"All the facts point to the conclusion that the woman seen on board the pursuing yacht was Sophia Kirby.

"Sir G. contrived to throw her off the scent: we shall see what happens when we put once more upon his track.

"Put the following advertisement in the Times, Daily News, Telegraph, and any other paper you think likely to fall into the hands of S. K. or John Barton—Lloyd's might be as good as any for such people as they—

"'Sophia Kirby.—If Sophia Kirby, lately with Sir Gilbert Linton, will communicate with A. B., care of Mrs. Giles, 2 King's Square, Goswell Road, she will hear of something greatly to her advantage.'

"Aunt Sarah will receive and send on to you any letter that comes, if you ask her.

"If S. K. does answer the advertisement, send the letter under cover to me at once, and I will instruct you how to act.

"Yours affectionately,

"E. PIERCE."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Her Crime Atoned.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE" "VERA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.—[CONTINUED.]

"Don't wait till then, darling," cried Roy eagerly, while his grasp tightened round her slim waist.

"Let me take you away now, and when we are married, Mr. Matthison can't do anything!"

But to this forcible plan of taking the initiative Alice would not agree, and all her lover's sophistries and persuasions were of no avail in overcoming her scruples, so Etheredge desisted in sheer weariness at last, and began telling her of his own concerns, and the arrival of his sister from school.

"I wish you could see her, Alice!" he exclaimed enthusiastically, "she is—excepting yourself—the dearest girl in the whole world."

And then they drifted into a long talk of all the things they would do in that happy future when Alice would be released from her uncle's authority, and she would go to Etheredge Court as its mistress, and life would be one long dream of delight.

Happy youth, that can thus merge all its troubles into the sweets of the coming years—the years whose fulfilment never equals its promise!

These two standing together in the chilly church porch, were both carried into a region of romance.

They forgot the distance that must so soon separate them; they were oblivious of the cold damp rawness of the December afternoon, whose misty shadows were closing rapidly in round them even now—they only remembered their love, and that was sufficient for them.

But time, the implacable, will not stand still even for lovers, and the moments wore on, the shadows grew denser, and at last the church clock struck five; and Roy started in astonishment at finding it so late, and declared he must not linger a minute longer if he would catch the train.

A few hasty, passionate kisses followed, a fervent embrace, a quick whisper containing an assurance of undying love, and then Roy said adieu, and left Alice standing inside the porch, watching his retreating figure through a blurred mist of tears.

He had not disappeared before another figure came down the path and met him—a tall, spare man with iron-gray hair, at the sight of whom Alice drew quickly backward, for she recognized it as her uncle's, and her heart began to beat rather rapidly as she thought of what the consequences would be if he found her here.

He could not help seeing Roy, whom he passed with the slightest possible inclination of the head, and then he came on down to the church.

Alice was quite aware that her presence would be sufficient to enlighten him as to the real position of the affair he was congratulating himself on having put an end to six months ago, and that his wrath would be unbounded when he knew he had been hoodwinked, so, quick as lightning, she ran silently up the stairs and hid herself in the organ loft.

She had told Mr. Matthison she was going to spend the evening and stay the night with a friend living about a mile away, and she thought that if she left her concealment as soon as her uncle had departed she could go on to this friend—who was in her confidence—and then the rector would imagine Roy had come down only on the chance of seeing her, and had gone back disappointed.

Mr. Matthison came inside the church, looked around suspiciously, but seeing no one, went back, and locking the door, put the key in his pocket, thinking he would take it to the sexton's cottage, and thus save the sexton a journey.

He chuckled to himself as he went, enjoying the idea of how completely Roy had been sold, if he had been skulking about with the intention of seeing Alice—Alice whom he imagined was by that time safely housed in a neighboring parsonage.

But, unfortunately for her, such was not the case.

As soon as she imagined her uncle had departed, and the coast was clear, the young girl descended from the organ loft, and cautiously tried the door by which she had entered.

She turned the handle, once—twice—three times, but it resisted all her efforts, and then the conviction that it was locked and she was shut in, flashed upon her with a sudden terrified certainty, and she stood still a minute, trying to think what she had better do.

None of the windows opened except from the top, so it was useless to think of them as a means of exit; the only chance left, therefore, was the vestry door, which might possibly be open, as there had been a service in the church earlier in the day.

But, no! When she tried it she found it as secure as the other; and poor Alice, realizing her situation, sat down on one of the pew benches and burst into a flood of miserable repentant tears.

She sat there for two or three hours—until her limbs grew numb, and her hands ached with the cold.

She watched the clouds drifting over the sky, and obscuring the faint light of the stars, and then the wan crescent of the young moon appearing above the leafless tree tops, and sending a pale, uncertain radiance down on the white tombstones that covered the quiet dead below.

If you had asked her before, she would have told you she knew every feature of the landscape by heart seeing that she had been familiar with it from childhood, but to-night, she discovered a hundred new points in it—indeed, in that silent, star-illumined December darkness, it presented an aspect that was quite strange at first, but which gradually became terribly familiar.

At last, Alice was forced to withdraw from the window and strive to get up a quicker circulation of her blood by exercise.

She walked backwards and forwards up and down the aisles for about half an hour, her footsteps waking a strange reverberating echo that sent a thrill of half superstitious fear through her veins; and at last, thoroughly wearied and exhausted, she ensconced herself in a roomy old square pew close to the chancel, and proceeded to make herself as comfortable as circumstances admitted.

Some of the cushions she piled up for a pillow, the rest she put over her feet, and then she closed her eyes, and finally so far overcame the terror of her situation as to drop into a fitful, troubled slumber.

How long this lasted she could not say, she suddenly started up, wide awake, with cold drops of prespiration beading her brow.

She had distinctly heard a noise from inside the vestry, and, brave girl as she was, her heart actually stood still at a repitition of the sound—that of a person stumbling over something in the dark—broke on her ears. She waited for a moment, until her self-possession in a measure came back, and then leaned over the pew in such a position as to command a view of the vestry, and just as she did this a light, coming seemingly from a dark lantern, fell in a long slanting ray across the stone floor, and showed her the figure of a man standing just inside the doorway.

Alice's first idea was that burglars had broken in for the purpose of stealing the communion plate, but she abandoned this a few minutes later on discovering that only one man was there, and he had taken up the register, and was rapidly turning over the leaves as if seeking some particular entry.

He had so placed the lantern he carried that its light fell upon the pages, and as he bent over them, Alice was enabled to make out the outline of his figure—that of a medium-sized, rather slim man, wrapped in a large overcoat with a fur collar.

By this time the young girl's courage had all come back, and she had recovered sufficient self-possession to concentrate all her attention on this midnight intruder, to whom she was in reality quite close, as the door leading from the vestry to the church was wide open.

It was evident he must have some felonious motive in coming thus, with every precaution for secrecy, in the dead of night; but whatever it might be she had no power to prevent it, for to seek to disturb him would only result in drawing his attention to herself, and that she far from desirous of doing.

Her only alternative, therefore, would be to remain quiet and watch him.

At length he paused, and placing his finger one page remained for a few seconds lost in thought; then, drawing a knife from his pocket, he carefully cut the leaf out of the register, put it away in a small leathern case he carried in his hand, and afterwards restored the book to its original position.

As he came back from doing this he stood for a moment just within the radius of the light, and Alice saw a handsome blond face that she felt sure she should be able to recognize if she ever met him again.

Having finished his task, he hastily concluded his preparations for leaving; and obscuring the lantern, took up a large bunch of keys, opened the vestry door, relocked it with as little noise as possible, and then went out into the sombre darkness of the December night.

CHAPTER V.

"How the days fly past!" exclaimed Vivien, throwing down an almanac she had been looking at.

"Why, we shall have Christmas here almost directly."

She was sitting in the luxurious morning room at Etheredge Court with Fraulein Schultz, the two gentlemen having gone out shooting earlier in the day, after declaring their intention of not returning until night; and Vivien, thus thrown on her own resources for amusement, had been seized with a fit of restlessness, and told Fraulein she did not know what to do with herself.

As a rule she did not mind being alone, having plenty to occupy both time and thoughts, but lately she had not been herself—she had grown thoughtful, dreamy, and yet unsettled.

Truth to tell, her mind dwelt a great deal on her encounter with Keith Gordon and she constantly found her fancy wandering away to that dark sombre face with its fathomless eyes—which held fathomless depths either of sorrow or remorse.

She often wondered what had brought that brusque coldness to his manner, and given him that weary, hopeless cynicism that seemed so much more acquired than natural, but she had no means of gratifying her curiosity; for after what Roy had said she dared not approach the subject again, and he was the only one in a position to give her any information regarding it.

Roy had spoken of some terrible crime, and charged Gordon with it, and all unconsciously a hot indignant wrath, a vehement belief in his innocence, had grown up in the girl's heart—perfectly unreasonable, no doubt, but none the weaker on that account.

She longed to see him again, to speak to him, to feel the spell of his presence, even though he should treat her with the cold indifference he had manifested the other morning.

"Fraulein!" she exclaimed, starting up and throwing back the rippling masses of hair that had become loosed from their fastenings, and strayed in thick coils over her shoulders, "If you'll put on your bonnet and mantel I'll take you for a walk, and show the spot where I was so near ending my mortal career."

"So," said Fraulein, with the serene imperturbability of her nation, but she rose and went to get ready, and a quarter of an hour later the two ladies were wending their way to the woods, which, as Fraulein observed, did not offer a very inviting appearance for a promenade.

It was not actually raining, but the air was full of a damp mist which clung to the bushes in beady drops of moisture, lay over the hollows in a faint blue cloud, and hid the distant hills under a gray veil of fog.

Fraulein Schultz, in a huge cloak that made her look as round as one of her native sausages, and Vivien, clad in a tight-fitting cloth ulster that showed the perfect curves of her figure to the greatest possible advantage, were pretty well weather-proof, and even succeeded in getting a certain modicum of enjoyment out of their walk, which may perhaps be accounted for by the fact of their having been kept prisoners to the house for the last three days.

"There!" said Vivien, with an attempt at playfulness, as they came to the tower and paused in front of it, "that is the scene of the tragedy.

"Was not Mr. Gordon brave in rescuing me?"

"I do not see that he could have done less, my love; he would have been a brute to go on his way and leave you to die," was the German's common-sense reply; and Vivien, not in the least inclined to take such a practical view of a situation she had worked up into an actual romance, drew her arm through that of the elder lady, and led her on along the path she had observed Gordon take when she left him.

It led for some distance through the wood and then brought them to a stile dividing it from a lane which was the boundary of Gordon's estate.

The house was quite near, and Vivien could see from where she stood the moss-incrusted battlements, the gray stones partly covered with ivy, and that stack of chimneys she had noticed on the night of her first arrival in England.

Fraulein, who had also stopped, wondered to see the strange interest in the girl's dreamy eyes as she gazed on what seemed to her governess nothing more than an exceedingly gloomy old habitation.

Before she had time to make any comment, a storm of hail came on quite suddenly, and put every idea out of her head save the more immediate one of obtaining shelter.

"Ach, Himmel!" she exclaimed, drawing the hood of her cloak well up over her head. "This beautiful English climate of yours is always playing us such tricks.

"What are we to do?"

Vivien was not quite ready with a reply, for shelter there appeared to be none.

Just as she was about suggesting a return to the wood, there came the sound of wheels, and a dog-cart turned the corner and rattled past—to be pulled up by its driver immediately opposite the two ladies.

"Do you want to get under cover?" asked Gordon—for it was he—gravely addressing Vivien, into whose cheeks a vivid carmine had rushed.

"My house is within two minutes' drive, and is at your service if you like to accept it."

Vivien hesitated momentarily, thinking of what Roy would say.

Fraulein, who had no further scruples than to let herself be assisted by a great black-bearded stranger, and to whom personal comfort was a paramount consideration, immediately clambered up into the cart, and Vivien had no alternative but to follow.

A little farther up the lane a gate stood open, and through this Gordon drove into a neglected looking avenue that led them straight to the house, whither they arrived in less time than its master mentioned, for he was driving a blood mare that went like the wind—much too fast, in fact, for Fraulein's peace of mind.

At the entrance to the Chase a grim-looking servant took the reins, and Gordon lifted the two ladies down.

He then led them through a wide hall and across a passage which brought them to a room that seemed to be his own peculiar sanctum, for it was in a state of the most masculine untidiness, being littered over with papers, books, pipes, whips and boots—a collection that must have taken some time to bring it to its present state of perfection.

Fraulein, stepping gingerly across the floor so as to avoid coming in contact with sundry powder flasks and gun-cleaning apparatus that lay thereon, seated herself in an armchair near the fire, and doubtless speculated on the metamorphosis she would effect if she were let loose in the room with a couple of brooms and a dustpan.

"I don't apologise for bringing you here," said Gordon, closing the door, and taking up a position with his back against it, "for it is the only room with a fire except the kitchen, and I could hardly take you there."

"There are no apologies needed; we are very grateful to you for taking us in at all," said Vivien.

"As for this room"—glancing around—"I find it much more interesting than one where everything has its place, and is put in it, and where you have no chance of guessing at its owner's tastes.

"Now your study—I suppose you call it so—bears at least the stamp of individuality."

"The individuality of disorder you should add," amended Gordon, with the nearest approach to a smile she had seen on his face, and which made it look, for the moment, singularly winning.

"The truth is, I never permit anyone to come here but myself, except, indeed, my housekeeper, who twice a year makes a raid on it with her scrubbing brush, and renders me uncomfortable for weeks after."

"A Christmas visitation, I suppose," laughed Vivien.

"You will have to submit to it again soon, for Christmas is very near.

"Do you like the season?"

"No," he answered, sharply and briefly. "It is, of all the year, the time I detest the most, for it is the time that deepens the memory of past sorrows, and brings them before me in all their first bitterness."

He seemed to have been betrayed into saying more than he intended, and after he had finished speaking, he crossed over to the window and looked out to see if the weather showed any signs of improvement, which Vivien interpreted as a signal that he was impatient to be relieved of his duties as host.

"I don't think it will be long before we shall be able to go," she said, rather timidly, as she followed his example, and glanced up at the leaden sky.

"No," he replied, "these sort of storms don't often last more than a quarter of an hour or so, and when it is over I can have you driven home in my dog-cart if you like."

"You are very good, but we are well provided with thick shoes, and so long as it is dry overhead we shall be all right," she said hastily.

He made no attempt to press the offer, but stood gazing moodily out of the window, and, as it seemed, almost unconscious of the presence of his visitors, one of whom—Fraulein Shultz—had taken up a German newspaper and become absorbed in its contents.

As for Vivien, it never had once struck her to feel resentful at the small meed of attention Gordon bestowed on her; she had only seen him twice, and yet the interest he had awoke in her, and the actual fascination he seemed to exert over her senses, was almost inexplicable.

As he stood there, with his large, muscular, but perfectly symmetrical figure half leaning against the window frame, and his profile turned towards her, Vivien found herself comparing him with Trevor Etheredge.

Strictly speaking, the latter was undoubtedly the handsomer of the two, but there was not in his classical beauty one little of the charm possessed by this man, with his sad brown eyes, and long beautiful curled lashes.

"What fine lashes they were!" Vivien said to herself, bending a little forward to examine them.

"Why, they were as long an silky as her own!"

She drew back in confusion, for Gordon looked up and their eyes met—hers fell instantly, while a deep blush mantled her cheek, and Gordon must have been either more or less than man if he could have beheld her at that minute, and not been struck with her loveliness.

"I beg your pardon, I am very rude," he said, rousing himself "but"—with a bitter smile, "I am so unaccustomed to the *role* of host that I almost forget the part."

"Then you don't see many visitors?" asked Vivien, hardly knowing what she was saying, but feeling it incumbent on her to say something.

"I see none at all, and have not done so for many years, and my establishment, as it at present stands, would forbid it as much as"—he was going to add "my inclination," but checked himself, and left the sentence unfinished, adding, "my staff of servants is limited to two, the man you saw at the door and his wife."

"It is sufficient, as you are alone."

"Quite," he answered laconically, and then continued.

"It is very dull for you here, Miss Etheredge, and I really have no resources for amusing you, except, indeed, the picture gallery.

"Would you care to see it, or is it too cold?"

Vivien answered the last question in the negative, Fraulein in the affirmative, so she stayed by the fire with her German paper, while Gordon led his younger guest up the broad shallow oak stairs, and into an older portion of the house, where, he pointed out to her the various celebrities whose effigies adorned the walls.

There were one or two interesting pictures among them—a fair-faced beauty of the Court of Charles, painted by Sir Peter Lely, in all the bravery of her silks and laces—an unfortunate cavalier who had fallen by the side of princely Rupert—two or three fair dames of a later era, whose soft, clear coloring announced Gainsborough as the artist.

Gordon seemed to be making an effort to overcome the scornful indifference that had grown habitual to him; and as he talked of art—a subject in which he was evidently well versed—his face lighted up, and his manner developed more into that of a polished man of the world than Vivien could have deemed possible.

More than once the thought struck her of what her brother would say could he see her walking through the dim old gallery, against the stained glass windows of which the hailstones still rattled dismally, in company with this tall, gloomy man in his velveteen shooting suit, which, old and shabby as it was, yet lent him an air of picturesqueness that an artist would like to have caught, and given to one of his creations—a glaour, a corsair—a moss trooper—anything a little outside this practical nineteenth century of ours.

As for Gordon, his thoughts were running somewhat in the same groove.

It was so long since he had walked by the side of a dainty, high-bred lady that there seemed something strange in it.

The presence of Vivien herself, fair and young as she was, in that gloomy old house had in it an element of the incongruous.

He breathed a quick, impatient sigh as he stole a look at her, confessing to himself that in all those lines of painted beauties there was not one half so exquisite as this delicate maiden, with her warm tints and her living, breathing loveliness.

"We have some old pictures at Etheredge Court, but our collection is much inferior to yours," said the young girl, as they paused at the end of the gallery, and close to a door across which a green baize curtain had been drawn.

"There is one old one in which I am rather interested, although the artist is unknown.

"I say it is a Van Dyck, but my cousin, Trevor Etheredge, says not."

Vivien paused abruptly, conscious of the mistake she had unintentionally made in mentioning Trevor's name, by the change that came over Gordon's face.

It was not altogether hate, or fiery scorn or even anger.

But mingled with all these was an expression of the keenest sorrow and regret that was well nigh pathetic.

She had no time to say more, and endeavor to cover her involuntary slip of the tongue, for at that juncture the door at the end of the passage opened, the green baize was pushed aside, and Vivien saw in the aperture a sight that almost transfixed her with amazement—a woman, still young, but so fragile looking, so ethereal and shadowy, that she might well have been taken for a spirit from another world.

She wore some soft white garment that fell in long straight folds to her feet, making her look like a pictured Madonna, or mediæval saint.

It was only for about ten seconds that she stood there; her sad dark eyes fastened on Vivien's face, then she dropped the curtain and disappeared as swiftly and silently as she had come, leaving the young girl to look at Gordon with an expression that said as plainly as if the request had been put into words—

"What does this mean?"

Keith's face had flushed a deep pained red, and he even seemed agitated by what had just taken place, but for a few minutes he kept silence.

Then he came a little nearer his visitor, and said in a low voice—

"Miss Etheredge, you have accidently surprised a secret that I would not have known on any consideration whatever.

"Your face looks trustworthy, will your discretion prove so?"

"Do you mean you wish me to say nothing of—of what I have just seen?" she demanded, drawing back a little haughtily.

"Yes."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Strong Plot.

BY JULIA GODDARD.

JOHN, I want to go out shopping this morning, and I don't care about taking Louie.

"Couldn't I bring her down to the office and leave her with you?"

"Why—yes. But the fact is, Bessie, we are dreadfully busy at the office just now, and I shan't have much time to attend to her."

"Oh, well, she'll take care of herself; she can look out of the windows, and there are lots of pictures to amuse her, you know. Only see that she doesn't go to the cases and handle the types, to get her clothes dirty."

"All right. Want to go with papa, Lu?"

"Yes, indeed I do."

And Louie's sweet blue eyes sparkled.

"Well, get her ready now, Bess, and I'll take her down with me," said papa John.

"That will be a good plan. And when I have finished I'll come to the office for her, and we can all come home together," arranged Mrs. Bessie, as she flew about putting fresh robes on the little six-year-old Louie, and tying up her pretty golden curls, so as not to keep John waiting.

John was editor of one of the city weeklies, and nothing pleased Louie better than to spend a morning at the office with him.

Sometimes she ventured into the great press-rooms, but her pretty dress usually bore the marks of it when she did that, so mamma Bessie had objections.

Her last charge to John, as he hurried out to catch an up-town train, was to keep Louie away from the type cases.

But John did not answer, or seem to hear, and as she went back into the house (she had been standing on the doorstep to see them off) Bessie remarked—

"I wonder what has come over John? He seems to be always thinking and studying lately. I would like to know what he's got on his mind."

But, as it couldn't be anything very serious, Bessie dismissed the subject from her mind, and prepared to go on her shopping excursion in her prettiest street costume.

And I can tell you Mrs. Bessie was pretty enough in any costume.

She hadn't faded or lost a speck of her freshness, though she had been married seven years and a half, and had done her own housework over half the time at that.

If that doesn't speak well for John Harding, I don't know what would, I'm sure.

But Bessie was right in thinking John had something on his mind.

And the "something" was this—

A writer who had promised to furnish a first-class serial for the paper failed to come to time, and John, who was pretty good in the story line, undertook to furnish it himself.

It was longer and far more sensational than anything he had yet attempted, however, and of course Editor John was very anxious to make a success of it.

His thrilling plot involved some legal points, of which he was not quite sure, and he was studying on these points this morning.

After he got to the office, to make all correct, John sat down and dropped a postal-card to a lawyer friend, stating his dilemma, and asking a reply by return mail, while little Louie, though she didn't go into the press-room, did find part of a case, which one of the boys had carelessly left upon the floor, and proceeded to make "pye" out of it, after the most approved order, and greatly to the detriment of her fresh blue dress.

The next day Mrs. Bessie tidied up her house swiftly, for the pretty fabrics she had bought the day before must be taken to the dressmaker's to be cut, and where is the woman who does not delight in that?

"Now, Louie," says she, "you can go with me to the dressmaker's, and as we come home we'll stop at Conner's and buy some strawberries for papa's dinner. He's so fond of them."

"Oh, strawberries! I'm so glad they've come again, mamma," exclaimed Louie. "Oh, there comes the postman. May I run and get the letters, mamma?"

"Yes, pet, go along."

Louie tripped to the front door, getting there so speedily that the postman had not time to knock.

Presently she came back with a postal-card.

"There was nothing but this, mamma."

Bessie took it, and glanced at it.

"It's for John," she said. "It's directed to the office, too. How came the stupid to leave it here, I wonder? But I can give it to him at dinner-time."

In crossing the room to lay it on the mantel, she just glanced at the other side, to see where it came from.

A word caught her eye.

"What on earth——"

She glanced again.

Good gracious!

That card to John Harding?

What Bessie read was this—

"JOHN HARDING:—

"DEAR SIR—You could not get a divorce upon the grounds you mention in America. Might do it in England perhaps.

"Yours, etc.

"L. THOMAS, Att'y-at-Law."

Bessie caught her breath, and turned as pale as death.

She fluttered and gasped a minute—grew red, then white again, and then said—

"Louie, I'll not go to the dressmaker's. Don't you want to go over to Nelly Hastie's and play a while?"

Louie was delighted to do that, so having got her out of the way, Bessie flung herself on the sofa, and cried her eyes half out.

And when, two hours later, John came in whistling a lively tune, for the dinner which was always ready so promptly, Bessie was still lying there, with rumpled braids and collar, and very red eyes.

"Why, Bess! are you ill, darling?" cried John, hastening to her side.

Bessie flung away the arm he attempted to throw round her, and flashed out—

"You'd better ask, you cruel monster! You thought your sins wouldn't find you out, did you?"

"Why, Bess! Bessie! What is the matter?" cried John, thunderstruck.

"Oh, you know! You know well enough!" burst out Bessie; "but you thought I wouldn't know! But I've found it out. I know all your wickedness! That stupid postman brought the card here instead of to your office, so I know all about it. And—and—you've—just—about—killed me!" and Bessie began to sob bitterly.

"Bessie," said John soberly, "I declare to Heaven I haven't the least idea what you are talking of."

"Yes, you have! You are a wretch!" sobbed Bessie. "You—you want—to run off—with some other woman! You know you do! And I dare say you—you've got her picked out! I'll—I'll stratch her eyes out, I will! I'll—I'll stratch her eyes out, I will! I'll—I'll pull all the hair out of her head! I dare say it's all false, anyhow! Oh, you wretch!"

"Good Heavens!" shouted John, "I do believe the girl has gone crazy. Bessie! Bessie! don't you know John? Don't you know your own John, that loves you so much?"

"Then—then—what did—you——want—to—sue for—a divorce for?" sobbed Bessie.

"Divorce! Heaven! Heaven! it's true! She is crazy, and what shall I do?" groaned John.

"I'm not crazy! There's the card!" declared Bessie. "It's on the mantel there! Your lawyer wrote it, and I got it! Read it yourself! And he—he says you can't get it, anyhow!"

A ray of light flashed over John just then.

He rushed to the mantel, found the card, read it—and then Bessie thought he had suddenly gone insane.

He dropped on the floor and burst into roars and peals of laughter—he rolled over and over, until, I solemnly declare, there wasn't a whole button left to his suspenders and he nearly grew black in the face before he could speak a word.

Then he said—

"Oh, Bess! Bessie! haven't you been a goose?

"You silly little thing, why didn't you tell me at first?

"Did you think I wanted a divorce from you?"

"Yes. What else could I think? What does that thing mean if you don't?"

"Why, you see, I'm getting up a sensation story for the paper, and the heroine wants to get a divorce, and I didn't want to make any ludicrous blunder, so I wrote to Tom, and stated the case as I meant to work it up, and asked him if it would do to locate the scenes in London, and be according to law—and that's what he says."

"Is that all, John?"

"That's all, I swear it. Why, Bessie, I believe yet you are a little crazy, or you would not have doubted your own John. Do you want to see the manuscript to convince you, little woman?"

Bessie didn't want to see it.

But she told John next time he got up a story, he must either tell her the plot, or else he mustn't write letters to London lawyers, and scare her to death.

And you may be sure Editor John will remember it.

LITTLE NATIONS.—The little republic of Andorra is a mere eagle's eyrie nesting up on the top of the Pyrenees. It is only a stone, as it were, to mark the boundary between France and Spain. This it has done for a thousand years.

It contains 12,000 people, who are said to be very primitive and moral. It is governed by two Viguiers and twenty consuls. Saint Marino, another dwarf nation, is still smaller. It consists of five small villages with 10,000 inhabitants, and is situated in Central Italy. San Marino dates back to the Diocletian persecution of the fourth century, when, as the somewhat legendary history has it, a pious stone-cutter by the name of Marinus and a few fellow-Christians sought escape from martyrdom by fleeing to that lonely retreat. They gradually coaxed a meager subsistence out of the reluctant soil, and, left to themselves, developed a simple form of government adapted to the needs of the community.

The present form of government dates from 1847. San Marino must be the paradise of office-holders. For its army of 819 soldiers it has 131 officers, and it elects four presidents a year. The Senate is composed of sixty life members. But there is a still smaller municipality—Monaco, situated on a high promontory on the Gulf of Genoa.

It has an area of six square miles and a population of about 3,000. It is a sanitarium for consumptives, but is chiefly noted as the greatest gambling hell in Europe. The prince that owns it derives an income of $350,000 per annum from the gambling institutions. Such in brief is the status of the three smallest nations in the world.

He that lacks time to mourn lacks time to mend

Scientific and Useful.

STAINS.—Fruit stains may be removed from linen by rubbing the spot on each side with soap, then laying on a mixture of starch in cold water, very thick; rub it well in and expose the linen to the sun and air till the stain comes out. If not removed in three days renew the process.

HIS VALUE.—Political economists of England and Germany have concluded a careful series of calculations by which they estimate that the value of an unskilled laborer, at 25 years of age, to his country is $1,200; that is, the average sum which such a person contributes during his life to the wealth of the community in which he lives.

HARDENING IRON.—Iron may be hardened as follows: "Heat the iron to a cherry red, then sprinkle on it cyanide of potassium and heat to a little above red, then dip. The end of a rod that had been treated in this way could not be cut with a file. Upon breaking off a piece about half an inch long it was found that the hardening had penetrated to the interior, upon which the file made no more impression than upon the surface. The same salt may be used to case-harden wrought iron."

POINTED NAILS.—A carpenter makes a plea through the *Scientific American* for pointed nails. He says: "Can you do or say anything to the nail-makers to induce them to put a point on the nails, something like wire nails, but perhaps not quite so peaked or sharp, nor to a point. This is, of course, more applicable to a finishing nail, but it would be of very much benefit for the ordinary nail; they can be stuck in their place with one blow, where two or more would be required with the square end, drive easier and keep their direction better."

COPYING PAPER.—A perpetually damp copying-paper, always ready for use, is prepared by dissolving one pound of chloride magnesium in a moderate quantity of warm water or cold water—about one pound. When dissolved, apply this solution with a brush to ordinary copying-paper (whether in book form or otherwise), or preferably by means of cloth pads saturated with the liquid, then place these pads between any suitable number of leaves; apply pressure, at first very moderately, until the absorption by the paper is complete; then remove the cloth pads and apply further pressure; it is then ready for use.

Farm and Garden.

SUNFLOWER.—Plant plenty of sunflowers. Some plant alongside a chicken run, in order to afford a little shade for the fowls. It is said that they purify the air and prevent fever and ague. We have seen some of the Russian mammoth sunflowers, of which it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they were as big as the bottom of a milk pan. The seeds are recommended very highly as chicken feed. California farmers raise sixty bushels of sunflower seed to the acre, and after grinding a gallon of oil from each bushel feed the refuse to the chickens and cows.

SMALL FLOCKS.—There is no doubt that a well-kept flock of poultry is the most profitable of all farm stock. But a little flock well kept, like a little farm well tilled brings the most profit to the farmer. Just as many as can be kept without crowding, and with ease and convenience, will be the most profitable. Poultry will not bear crowding any more than sheep or pigs or people, and it is well known that when any of these are too closely kept disease appears and works mischief. It is a necessity of the case, because cleanliness must be sacrificed to necessity.

THE GARDEN.—Do not think you must go without a flower bed unless you can get the new things with unspeakable names. Roses, poppies, pansies and asters are as nice as they ever were, and can be grown with but little trouble. Have a bed of flowers somewhere about the premises. A very nice flower bed can be made with our wild native flowers alone. Buttercups, dandelions, violets, golden-rod, the clover, yarrow and many other unnoticed plants will improve under proper cultivation. Then, if you want elegance and regularity of foliage what is better than a single plant of the common ragweed or Roman wormwood?

SHEEP.—This remedy for foot rot in sheep is said to be unfailing: Take equal parts in weight of red lead and pulverized blue vitrol; add enough nitric acid to make a thick paste; after paring the hoof until all diseased parts will be well exposed, apply with paddle. Sheep should remain in house with dry floor twenty-four hours after being treated, unless the weather is quite dry, when it is much better to turn on a dry, short sod; but care should be taken to prevent sheep from crossing streams or mud. Three applications are usually sufficient.

HOW TO KEEP FLOWERS.—As a general thing flowers will droop and fade in a day and night; yet there are kinds, like the camellias and eupatoriums, which can be kept longer if the water is changed morning and night, and a few drops of camphor spirits added to it. Put the faded flowers into a dish of scalding hot water deep enough to cover one-third of the stems or put them into cool water with a small bit of saltpeter in it. Flowers will keep longer in dishes of wet sand than in vases of water.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-THIRD YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 14, 1884.

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FORBEARANCE.

Even the trained philosopher, in the first flush of surprise—before he has had time for that quick search for the silver lining to the cloud which renders him so superior to ordinary mortals in the matter of bearing trouble—loses his ordinary self-control and shows that some unexpected or disagreeable blow tells on him, and as he receives the taps which Fate sometimes loves to administer with the point of her finger, he cannot always conceal the fact that his "temper is up," and the desire for "breaking out" in some shape or form rages within him.

And it is mostly in the reception of these "love-taps" that the individual peculiarities of people show themselves.

What one will laugh at and take as a jest, another will accept in sober earnest—at least, if not a matter of life and death

What to one is a mole-hill, and indeed hardly that, to another is a mountain whose ascent is well-nigh impossible, and the former class of beings—merry, good-tempered, jovial souls they are, "the salt of the earth," morally speaking—have no hesitation in calling the latter queer, cranky, crazy, and with some show of reason to their cheerful, well-balanced minds.

But, nevertheless, the criticisms are a trifle unjust, for jolly folks, blest with that best of all gifts, the knack of taking cheerfully whatever falls to their lot, have their own peculiarities in other ways.

Parents will sometimes see these queer traits in their children, and try to "whip it out of them," as they say; but they might as well try to stop the sea from coming to a certain point, like the English Canute of old; one is as much nature's will and doing as the other.

And it is to these persistent attempts at trampling down and totally destroying what is evidently planted and meant to grow, this moral rough handling, so to speak, that many children, with the grit, nerve, and general right impulses which ought to make them good, useful members of society, owe their ultimate downfall.

Most people have one code for bringing up children; they must all conform to it whether it suits their temperaments or not. If they do wrong in any shape or form, a whipping or a scolding, or at least a sample of that perpetual menacing and bullying which is the ruin of so many youngsters, is their portion.

Yet "the child," we are told, "is father to the man," and everybody knows there are plenty of men who can be led into anything on the face of the earth by kindness, and yet are the ugliest-tempered, most mulish beings alive when anything like stiff-backed coercion is attempted.

There are children born bad, or, as a minister once expressed it, "with the devil in them;" but even these can be more easily governed by judicious kindness. And kindness with even "children of a larger growth," will, in the majority of cases, work like a charm.

There are people, of course, who will not scruple to take advantage of it; generally evil-hearted they are, and sometimes completely "gone to the dogs," poor souls? But they have not gone there all at once; rather by degrees, and very likely the first step on the road was a flogging delivered at the wrong time.

Forbearance is something which can hardly be too highly estimated; through life it is the friend of not only the recipient but also the one who exercises it.

Something invaluable when dealing with our friends—especially in the matter of their peculiarity—it will not often be abused when extended to our enemies: something of which we need never be ashamed, which will always brighten the past when we look back, and, in fact, save it from being absolutely miserable.

It is, indeed, a virtue in itself, one which, like the greatest of all, charity, will certainly "cover a multitude of sins."

THERE are no blessings, however great, that discontent will not convert into evils, and no trials, however severe, that serenity and virtue may not transform into blessings.

KEEP up the habit of being respected, and do not attempt to be more amusing and agreeable than is consistent with the preservation of respect.

SANCTUM CHAT.

EIGHT million envelopes is calculated as the daily production of all the factories in the United States, seven million being produced by ten manufactories. Fifty-one thousand envelopes is believed to be the greatest number made by any one machine in a single day.

—

COMFORTABLE sepulture is one of the chief objects in the life of the British workman, and, if he wishes to stand well with his fellows, he belongs to a burial society. In Ireland, too, the burden of life is lightened by the prospect of a fine funeral, while in France the greatest ambition of the proletariat, and, indeed, of all classes, is to give his daughter a handsome dowry.

—

THE DURATION of life in England is on the increase. Men's lives are prolonged two, and women's three and one-third years beyond the limit of thirty-five years ago. The change is ascribed to various causes, prominent among which are the influence of the Public Health act, the progress of the temperance movement, and the diminishing virulence of epidemics.

—

"I SEE in this world," said a good man, "two heaps—one of human happiness, the other of human misery. Now, if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add it to the other, I carry a point. If, as I go home, a child has dropped a penny, and it, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad to do greater things, but I will not neglect this."

—

SUICIDES by drowning are more frequent in the summer, while hanging and poisoning are preferred in winter, according to a medical journal. Poisoning was once the favorite mode of suicide, but hanging has gradually become more popular. In France mature men generally hang themselves, and young men shoot themselves in the head. Women throughout Europe, except Russia, prefer death by drowning.

—

THE Austrian Parliament has passed a bill assuring compensation to persons wrongly convicted. This is the first time such a measure was adopted by a European legislative assembly. It was stated by one of the speakers in its support, that during the last twenty years 148 persons had been made "victims of judicial errors" in the Empire. A similar measure was introduced in the Belgian Parliament in 1874. It has been re-introduced this year.

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AMONG the instructive, if not entertaining, statistics of the census of 1880, are these: There are 563 establishments engaged in the manufacture of patent medicines, and their yearly product is put down at nearly fifteen millions. There are 6,502 "drug and chemical establishments," reporting a product amounting to over thirty-eight millions; and 30,000 "drug stores," with an estimated total of sales amounting to $150,000,000. Add to this the fees of 85,671 doctors and it will be seen that this great country pays liberally for its health.

—

THE directors of the charity department of the Skin and Cancer Hospital in New York propose to buy an estate in West Chester county upon which will be built numerous wooden pavilions for the accommodation of persons afflicted with contagious diseases. As these buildings become impregnated with contagion it is proposed to tear them down and erect new ones in their place. This is as it should be everywhere. The floors, ceilings, and even the brick and stone, in substantially built hospitals must become charged with infectious matter which no disinfectant can dislodge or render inert.

—

"ONE of the most astonishing features of the present trend of thought in the modern Athens," says a Boston paper, "is the hold which spiritualism and clairvoyance have taken in what are usually known as the higher walks of life. Not, of course, in the more markedly intellectual circles, but among the wealthy and fashionable have the vagaries of mediums and soothsayers a host of more or less believers. Strictly literary circles are little affected, albeit the amateur band who hover on the borders of professional authorship may count in its ranks certain distinguished examples, prominent among them a lady who holds weekly conversations with the spirit of her deceased husband through a professional trance medium. Perhaps this state of things is the natural consequence of the scepticism of the age, but in any case it is a sufficiently striking phenomenon."

—

NEW YORK CITY claims to have more than a thousand women who speculate in stocks, grain, oil, whisky and every other way known to the sterner sex, but brokers, as a rule refuse their custom. The reasons for this were expressed by a broker thus: "Their risks are small, and if they lose—phe-w-w!" "But supposing they make a hit?" "Well, then they grow confidential. They tell you they knew it was coming so. They dreamed of a black cat or the baby cried twice in its sleep or something like that. They swear by their dreams. If a woman has a certain dream and puts her money on that dream, and when the market goes the wrong way, why she has been swindled by the operator."

—

SAYS Proctor, the great scientist: "Only a portion of the water which falls on the earth ever returns to the surface in the form of springs. Artesian wells show how very slowly some of the strata of earth permits water which has just reached them to pass through, but they also show how large a portion of the earth's waters are already beneath the surface. It may well be that the amount actually withdrawn from the sea surface in this way, and not restored, does not produce a change of level of more than a foot in a thousand years. Still, even that would involve a very important alteration in the aspect of the earth in such periods of time as belong to the planet's history. A million years would reduce the sea level by a thousand feet, and in a period of time, which cannot be reckoned long when compared with the vast periods of which the heaven and earth speak to us, every trace of water would have disappeared from the surface of the earth.

—

"WHITELEY'S" is an immense store in London, whose owner finds pleasure in denominating himself the "Universal Provider." In early life he went through the usual routine—was clerk and salesman, and even traveling salesman, for some years, started a store of his own, and succeeded from the first. Now his warehouses cover more acres than he can count, and he employs five thousand men and women on the premises. There is no article for which he will not take an order—"an ironclad, a wife or a child, it is all the same to me. I receive your order and execute it in the regular course." A story used to be current in London of a bet between two men at a club that an order could be sent to Whiteley which he would not execute. The order was for a second-hand coffin, and it was filled. The loser of the bet inquired of Mr. Whiteley how the coffin came to justify its description as second-hand. "Sir," answered the Universal Provider, "it was a misfit."

—

REVEALED law concerns itself with the thoughts and purposes of men, as well as with their acts, whether secret or overt. It forbids us wilfully to entertain any thought or intention that might be deemed criminal, unlawful or improper, if reduced to practice. Its prohibition is as pronounced against malicious, mean and degrading thoughts as against acts of a corresponding nature. And this is eminently just and proper. Every time we willingly entertain any thought, or form any purpose, whether good or bad, its recurrence becomes more natural and certain. Furthermore, frequent repetition in that direction leads almost invariably to putting the thought or purpose into effect. Besides, many persons who have closely observed the workings of the human mind, claim that a malignant or degrading thought, repeatedly entertained, may do as much to corrupt the heart, sear the conscience, and lower the moral standard, as though it were actually carried into exercise. Under such circumstances, religion is manifestly right in making this distinction, and placing its veto upon degrading thoughts and criminal purposes. In this and many other particulars the service rendered by religion in the economy of human life, is of the utmost importance.

PATIENCE.

BY A. Y. H.

Hold thou mine hand, beloved, as we sit
Within the radiance of our winter fire,
Watching the dainty shadows as they flit
On wall and ceiling, as the flames leap higher.
Hold thou mine hand, beloved, with the calm
Close clasp of love assured and at rest,
And let the peace of home, a blessed balm,
Fall on us, folding faithful breast to breast.
Hold thou mine hand, beloved, while I speak
Of all thy love hath done and borne for me,
The stronger soul supporting still the weak,
The good hand giving royally and free;
The tender heart that put man's roughness by,
To wipe weak tears from eyes too seldom dry.

I touch this thing and that, the pretty gifts,
The silver zone, the jewelled finger-ring,
The outward symbols of a love that lifts
My fate and me beyond life's buffeting.
Yet, oh, thrice generous giver! there remains
A thing for which I have not thanked thee yet.
Thy patience—through the long years with their pains—
Thy patience with my weakness and regret.
Ah, let me thank thee now with falling tears,
Tears of great joy, and deep, serene content,
And God be thanked that through the weary years
We saw together ere our lives were blent,
Although the years were desolate and long,
Thy patience matched thy love, and both were strong!

Never Despair.

BY M. W. PAXTON.

MRS. PEASLEE had been a widow for two years, and did not want to be a widow any longer.

She was very unhappy being a widow.

Not that she had so much regretted Peaslee—oh, no.

Indeed, if the truth were told, she had rather felt as if Peaslee were doing the handsome thing by her when he caught the measles.

He was seventy-eight or nine before he did this, and having escaped the contagion during his first childhood, he had a perfect right to it in his second.

But it went hard with him, and after an interesting illness of four days, during which he "swore the very hair off her head," as Mr. Peaslee informed her neighbor, Mrs. Brown, he passed away.

He was a man of property, and of course Mrs. Peaslee wept becomingly at his funeral, and made herself as gloomy as possible with crepe folds and bombazine.

She employed Paul Julius, the village poet, to write sixteen verses by way of an obituary notice—verses which Mrs. Julius, who was not romantic, declared touching enough to wring tears out of a gridiron.

She also had a tombstone set up to his memory, with a very-bent-over angel, with spreading wings, reclining against an urn which looked like a patent coffee-pot, and underneath the announcement of Mr. Peaslee's age, was inscribed this sentence from the Spanish—

"*Mas vale tarde que nunca.*"

She had asked one of her nephews, a wild young fellow just entering his senior year at college, for some expressive sentence from some foreign language to put on his Uncle Eben's tombstone, and the young rascal had imposed this—"Better late than never!" upon her, assuring her that it meant—"There is rest in Heaven!"

When Peaslee's will was opened, the widow was raging mad.

All his property had been willed to a certain Jonathan Ebenezer Peaslee, a relative of his, and the widow had only her "thirds."

But she charged the tombstone, angel and all, to the estate, and recovered the price of it.

After that, finding she was a desperate woman, Jonathan Ebenezer bought out her "thirds," and the widow set up a house for herself.

Directly crape began to give way to
dor ribbons.
d when a widow begins to don lavender, the fact is significant.

Mrs. Peaslee was still young.

She owned to thirty, but was really about forty and a very good-looking woman.

I suppose she had an undoubted right to look after a second husband.

Barzilla Bodge was her first flame.

The courtship was made easy.

Everything was lovely, and the course of true love ran smooth.

The wedding dress, white silk, with pale lavender trimmings, was ready, the day was set, and the cards printed.

But, to use the language of the nineteenth century, life had soured on Barzilla, and a week before the wedding, he was seized with cholera morbus, and in a few hours was no more.

Mrs. Peaslee was still a widow.

She put on the old mourning—it was by no means rusty—and wore it three months.

At the end of that time, she got a little bilious, the black was not becoming, so she went back to the lavender.

Squire Legro began to visit her.

The squire was a man of wealth, and Mrs. Peaslee considered herself very fortunate when he proposed.

Again the bridal day was appointed.

But, alas! fate was still unpropitious, and stepped in between the widow and her fond hopes of felicity, in the shape of Annie Tracy, the squire's seamstress, who threatened to sue the squire for breach of promise.

This was too much for that worthy gentleman, and he packed up his movables and escaped.

His hat was found on the shore of the river, together with a note directed to Annie and the widow, saying that he preferred death to disgrace, and announcing his intention "to shuffle off," etc.

His body was never found, and a year afterwards, he was seen, in the flesh, full one hundred and eighty pounds of it, along with his wife, and a pair of twin babies.

So, of course, he did not die when he expected to.

A month or two after the squire's exodus, John Nugent came to the town to engage in the very striking business of putting up lightning rods.

Immediately the widow was seized with a terrible dread of lightning.

She had rods put on all her buildings, the hen-house included.

Mr. Nugent took a room at her house.

When it thundered, she flew to him for protection.

He protected her.

When it did not thunder, she was afraid it was going to, and sought of him consolation.

He consoled her.

There was more lightning than usual that summer, and Mr. Nugent had his hands full.

Altogether, it was a delightful time.

Everybody was happy.

August the fifth was set for the wedding.

But, alas! on that day of all others, appeared at the widow Peaslee's front door, inquiring for Timothy Jenkins, a freckle-faced woman, with five children.

Mrs. Peaslee told her that she had not the honor of Mr. Jenkins' acquaintance.

And she called Mr. Nugent down to protect her from the woman's abuse.

At the first glimpse of him, the woman darted forward and seized him by the arm.

"Oh, Timothy, you heartless, unfeeling man you, to desert your affectionate wife and all your interesting family of children."

And then there was a fearful scene, during which a good deal of hair changed hands, and everything was badly mixed up.

And it all ended by Mrs. Jenkins marching Jenkins off with a young one on each of his shoulders, and the others hanging to his legs.

Still the Widow Peaslee was a widow.

At first she thought of falling sick, like the heroines in novels, when great emergencies occur, but on second thoughts, she changed her mind, and sought consolation in various little proverbs.

Scraps of poetry, also, came to relieve her mind.

She thought favorably of the wonderful production which begins—"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Then she remembered the spider—

"Three times the spider tried his web to fasten to the beam;
"Three times to cross the main had puzzle tried before Columbus.
"I will not give up to spiders, Spain, or aught but death."

quoth the widow courageously, and she bathed her eyes, for she had been *crying* a little, and prepared a plate of toast and jelly for old Peter Pray, who was rich and a bachelor.

But the Widow Jones was before her, supporting old Peter on her arm, and feeding him with mutton broth.

Mrs. Peaslee was too late.

She gave the toast to Jellison's dog, and went home almost in despair.

But Providence favored her.

A railroad was laid out in her vicinity.

It was constructed, and brought a great many strangers that way.

Mrs. Peaslee took some boarders—only single men.

James Juniper was one of them.

Juniper had charge of blasting operations on a ledge of rock a little distance off.

The widow fascinated him, and in due time they were engaged.

The day before they were to be married, a blast of powder went off without giving any notice, and as poor Juniper happened at the time to be standing directly over it, he went up.

When he made his ascent, he had two legs and two arms; when he descended, it was found that one of each was missing.

The widow received him at her house—what remained of him.

He lifted his powder-blackened face at the sight of her, and said, faintly—

"Hannah, are you going to give me up? Because, if you are, I won't have doctors a-sawing off my tones; but if you'll stick to me, then let 'em saw."

But the widow was loyal, and James was raised up to life again, though one of his legs is a wooden one, and he has only one arm with which to embrace Mrs. Juniper.

So you see, that patience and perseverance always bring forth their fruit, and when you feel inclined to despair, think of the Widow Peaslee, and renew your courage.

Ellie's Dowry

BY JULIA GODDARD.

"AND then, mamma, you must marry Mr. Raynor, and it is all right."

"Ellie!"

The shocked, pained tone checked the jest upon Ellie Morton's lips.

She was accustomed to seeing her mother pale and sad, and she knew that a tragedy of years ago had stricken all gladness from her life.

But never had she seen the patient, sorrowful face so deeply agitated as it was at this moment.

"Forgive me," she said, throwing her arms around her mother. "I am sorry I said that.

But Mr. Raynor does seem so fond of you—and he must be very rich."

"Hush, Ellie, hush. Never hint at such a thing again. I shall never marry."

"Did you love my father so dearly?"

"Yes, dear. I could never love again as I loved your father."

The girl looked at a portrait hanging upon the wall of her mother's room, where they had been seated, and inwardly thought it was no marvel the face there portrayed had won faithful, undying love.

It was the face of a young man, not more than twenty-two or three, with large, frank, hazel eyes, waving brown hair and regular features.

A face full of animation and power, yet giving promise also of great tenderness and sweetness.

Ellie Morton did not quite realize how her own living face mocked the still beauty of the picture, with its ever-varying expression in the same great brown eyes and sweet sensitive mouth.

Never were father and child more like, and Mrs. Morton's eyes following Ellie's, saddened anew at the resemblance that was at once her torture and her comfort.

But she shook off her own sadness to say, very gently—

"Do you love Louis so very dearly, my daughter?"

"I do love him. And I am quite sure he loves me, mamma, though he has never actually said so. But his uncle's death makes him rich, and from what he said last night, I am sure he wishes to speak to you of that love."

"And I may drive it away, Ellie?"

The girl lifted a pale face then.

"Drive it away?" she whispered.

"There is a secret in your life and mine, Ellie, that must be told before you may be the wife of an honorable man, as Louis Sajou is.

"You have forgotten, if indeed you ever guessed it."

"I have forgotten. What is it?"

"I cannot tell you now. I must see about the luncheon. But I will tell you some time to-day."

But the day slipped by, and the secret was untold.

In her manifold duties, she found no hour free for the confidence she had promised her daughter, till the evening shadows fell.

They were sitting together in the parlor, when Mr. Raynor came in with an exquisite basket of flowers.

"Permit me," he said, "to make a trifling gift in honor of the day."

"I wonder how he knew," Ellie thought, sure that she had not mentioned the fact that it was her mother's birthday to anyone.

She drew back a little, watching the stately old man as he made a deep bow and placed the basket on the table, and she wondered at the flush upon her mother's face, the trembling of the hand that hovered over the beautiful blossoms.

With a strange feeling of weight upon her own heart, she recollected the facts connected with Mr. Raynor's coming to the house two years before.

Since that time his polite attentions to her mother had been unceasing; he had shown her ever the most delicate deference, had made her many little presents of flowers and books.

"I am sure he loves her, and she likes him," Ellie thought, greatly puzzled, "and yet he does not ask her to be his wife, and she looks ready to faint if I speak of such a thing."

While she still watched these two, her own lover came in, and the four gathered around a small table and entered into general conversation.

But Louis Sajou was pale, too, this evening, and had an abstracted air.

Suddenly he said—

"Mrs. Morton, will you think me impertinent if I ask you a few questions? I will explain my reasons afterwards."

"Certainly not," was the gentle answer, though Ellie saw a startled look in her mother's eyes.

"Did you ever know a Lawrence Morton?"

"I knew him well."

Her very lips were white as the words passed them.

"Do you know where he can be found?"

"It is sixteen years since he left this place."

"True. He may be dead. It is a curious case, Mrs. Morton; but since it will soon be public, I will tell you why I am anxious to find Lawrence Morton. I was called upon to-day to draw up the will of Preston Pratt."

Here Mr. Raynor turned his face from the light and took up a newspaper.

But Ellie, watching him, saw that he listened intently, with a face rigid and white, and eager eyes.

"Mr. Pratt," said Louis, "made me a very curious confession, which I drew up in writing in the presence of two witnesses. It appears that some sixteen years ago he was the junior partner of a large wholesale business in this part, one of the firm of Marvin and Co."

Mrs. Morton shivered a moment as if chilled, and looked towards Mr. Raynor, but the newspaper screened his white face.

Ellie waited with fast beating heart, till her lover spoke again.

"Mr. Pratt confesses now, that he is a dying man, that he gambled heavily, and finding himself unable to meet his liabilities, fearing detection, he forged a cheque of the firm for ten thousand pounds. This was bad enough, but he did worse. He gave the cheque to the head clerk, Lawrence Morton, to take to the bank, selecting a time when they were alone in the counting-house.

"The cheque was detected as a forgery the next day, as Lawrence Morton was arrested.

"He gave a true account of the manner in which the cheque came into his possession, and Preston Pratt denied it.

"It was absurd, people said, to suppose a partner in the firm would rob the firm, and Lawrence Morton was committed for trial."

Again Mrs. Morton stole a timid look at the old gentleman opposite her, and again the newspaper baffled her.

But Ellie could see the old gentleman's teeth hard set and his breath coming in panting gasps.

"But the case was never tried," continued Louis, "for the prisoner escaped. It was ascertained afterwards that Mrs. Morton procured the money to bribe the warder, selling her jewelry, and the suspected forger escaped.

"But Preston Pratt lived here, frightened from his gambling propensities, working steadily till the retirement of the senior partners gave him the entire control of the business.

"He has made a mammoth fortune, and having never married, leaves the greater portion to public charities.

"But he wishes this confession published, to remove the stain from Lawrence Morton's name or memory.

"And he leaves ten thousand pounds with compound interest for sixteen years to Lawrence Morton if he can be found, or his heirs if he is dead."

"As if that could atone," cried Mrs. Morton, with her eyes blazing. "Will his money give back to Lawrence Morton the years he has spent in exile under the shadow of unmerited disgrace? Will it give to his wife the tender love, the sweet companionship she has missed for sixteen years? Will it bring to Lawrence Morton's child the father's love, that should have the most precious memory of her childhood, her girlhood, her maidenhood?

"Out upon such pitiful compensation. With the terror of death, Preston Pratt has done justice to my husband's name. His money may go where it will—I want none of it."

"Your husband!"

"My father!"

Louis and Ellie spoke in one breath.

"My husband and your father," said Mrs. Morton, putting her arms around her daughter. "My husband, who remained in exile, till he was so aged by sorrow and suffering that even his best friends would have failed to recognize him.

"Your father, Ellie, who, starving at last for the love from which he was thrust out by such cruel fraud, stole back under a false name, that he might see the wife he loved, the child who had forgotten him, though he might never reveal to them his identity or his affection."

The words came from the lips of the excited woman with rapid force, while her pale face flushed with excitement, and her eyes burned like diamonds.

"I promised you, Ellie, the story of my life to-night, and another has told it for me. I never doubted my husband's innocence. I never refused the name he gave me, that it was my pride to wear. When friends advised me to move from the home he had given me, to resume my maiden name, I told them that here is my home, bearing proudly his name, my husband should find me.

"I waited till my heart was sick with hope deferred for the vindication I was sure would come at last, for the end of the weary exile, the still more weary widowhood. It has come—at last it has come."

She waited one moment, and then rising from her seat, crossed the room to the chair where Mr. Raynor was seated.

The newspaper had fallen to the floor, and his face radiant with proud joy, was lifted to meet her gaze.

She put her hand upon his shoulder, and her voice was tender beyond description as she said—

"Lawrence, did you think you could hide yourself from me?"

He rose then, to fold her in a close embrace.

His voice trembled with emotion, as he answered—

"You know me, Ellen? Sometimes I have thought you did, but I would not bring upon you the burden of carrying my secret.

"But pain and separation are now over. Ellie!"

She answered the call at once, and as her father bowed his head to kiss her bright, sweet face, he shot one merry glance at Louis, who was watching the little drama with wondering, well-pleased eyes.

"What reward can I offer the bearer of such good tidings as you have brought to this house to-night?" he asked, releasing Ellie and her mother, and extending his hand to Louis.

The young man grasped the extended hand quickly.

"I ask only one reward," he said eagerly. "Since you have found so large a family, permit me to relieve you of the care of one member, promising her such tender protection as comes from deep true love."

"No," was the quick reply.

"Say rather you will add one more to this happy family, and if you take away my daughter, you will give to me and my wife a son."

"Gladly," was the cordial reply, "if Ellie will give me the right."

And Ellie, blushing and smiling, let her lover take her hand and put the kiss of betrothal upon her lips.

"And," continued Lawrence Morton,

"since Preston Pratt has done me tardy justice by his confession and his legacy, we will not utterly refuse the latter, but it shall be Ellie's dowry."

Then, as they were once more seated, he said—

"For in my years of exile, homesick and heartsick, thirsting for revenge and justice, I threw all the energy of my youth and strength into money-making.

"I escaped upon a sailing vessel to China, and landed there utterly friendless and penniless.

"But after months of suffering from extreme of poverty, I was taken into the employ of a tea company, who soon found I understood branches of business higher than those for which I was engaged, and promoted me till I had a position of trust, and, finally a partnership.

"When I was a wealthy man I sold out, and crossed the sea again, to find out if any here remembered me.

"I was aged by suffering, and old friends passed me by as a stranger.

"But coming here to my old home, fearing to find death or forgetfulness had preceded me, I found one true heart, one bearing still my stained name, keeping my picture enshrined in her own room, cherishing every gift I had ever given her.

"I hoped to win a place in her heart under my assumed name, to share with her my wealth as her second husband.

"But she was not to be won so. She waited for my vindication, and it has come."

But in a few months there was a grand wedding, when Ellie became the bride of Louis Sajou, and was given to her proud, happy husband by her father, fully restored to his wife, child, and friends.

The Lesson.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

MR. BESSEMER had been figuring diligently for the last half-hour in his little memorandum-book; and Mrs. Bessemer, with a pile of bright worsteds in her lap, from which she was matching a slipper pattern, wondered whatever could be so engaging him.

"There is no use talking Annie; we must retrench. Expenses must be reduced."

Now, when he did speak, and so suddenly, and so crossly, and shut up his little account-book with a small slam, she looked up inquiringly.

"Our expenses are not very large George. At least I never considered them large."

"I dare say you don't.

"You women have precious ideas of money matters."

Just the tiniest suspicion of a quiver trembled on Annie's lips; then she smiled brightly at him.

"But you mustn't be cross to me, George. I had no idea you were straitened in your business; why have you never told me before?"

Mr. Bessemer gave a queer, indistinct growl, then settled back in his chair, twirling his lead pencil between thumb and fingers.

"Well, I've told you now, at any rate, and I'm sure I don't mean to be cross either.

"Only, Annie, I can't afford to spend so much money on so many unnecessary things as there are in our house.

"I need all above our actual expenses in the business."

"I thought business was good.

"Only George, I wish you would tell me what you mean by 'unnecessary expenses.'"

Annie was looking very earnestly in her husband's face; and there was a puzzled expression that added to the seriousness of her pretty brown eyes.

Annie Bessemer was not an extravagant woman, and she knew it perfectly well.

So, what could George mean?

He colored a little under her quiet scrutiny before he answered.

"The truth is, Annie, it is just such gimcracks as that"—he pointed to the pile of beautiful zephyrs she had been shading—"that take all the loose money we ought to put into business."

Annie's eyes suddenly filled with tears.

She felt vexed with herself for so little self-control as to permit him to see how his words touched her, but she could not hide them from him.

Instead, she smiled through them.

"I intended to make a pair of tufted slippers for your birthday.

"You admired brother Ed's so much, and your own are worn nearly out."

She quietly began to roll up the velvet and zephyrs.

"Oh, slippers, oh?" and Annie detected the mollified tone of voice.

"Since you've bought the stuff, you'd better use it, hadn't you?

"It would be a wicked waste to throw it aside."

Mrs Bessemer suddenly saw daylight drifting through the previous obscurity of her husband's remarks.

Quick as a flash, she decided on her mode of action, and went on folding up the velvet.

"Perhaps you are right as to this 'gimcrack,' George," she said, utterly disregarding his last remark.

"The velvet will make George a jacket."

Mr. Bessemer watched her lay it away with a slight chagrin on his face; but he wasn't the man, he said to himself, to let her see it.

"To return to the subject of retrenchment, Annie; and as I said, these useless, trifling ornaments that are scattered from garret to kitchen of our house are partly what are eating up my income.

"I declare, I fairly hate to see 'em when I come in the house.

"They shall not trouble you again.

"What else can I do reduce expenses, George?"

He imagined there was sarcasm in his wife's tones; but scan her as narrowly as he could, he discovered no lurking smile in eyes or lips.

"Well, yes; as long as we're talking about it, I may as well tell you I think you might manage with one girl instead of two. My mother never kept any, and she had eleven children and her husband to do for."

A vision of her mother-in-law rose before Annie's eyes, but she forbore to comment.

"A cook, housemaid, and mistress seem at least one too many," he continued.

"Couldn't you get a stout girl to do the 'rough?' And I know you could cook."

"It shall be as you say," she murmured.

"Discharge the servants yourself, George, and send me a stout girl to do the rough."

Was she making fun of him?

For the life of him he couldn't tell.

And then Annie went out of the room.

* * * * *

It looked very strange.

From garret to basement there was no look of that delightful coziness that characterizes home, and even Mr. George Bessemer, whose suggestion had wrought all the change, wondered, until it suddenly occurred to him what was the matter.

Not a "gimcrack" visible.

Not a tidy, a mat.

No mantel-cover, no card-receiver, no sofa-pillows, no affghan in the parlor—all of them Annie's handiwork.

Even the dainty straw-framed prints had disappeared, and everything looked prim and stiff.

In the dining-room it was as bad.

But in the bedrooms!

Not a sign of toilet-suits.

No hair-receivers.

No dainty Swiss guards over the washstands.

Well, it did look queer, and bare, and lonesome.

But as he said to Annie he fairly hated the sight of them, thinking how much they cost, he was not going to acknowledge that he miss them.

"Well, Annie, how are you getting along?"

"How does your new girl do?"

Mrs. Bessemer smiled wearily, and her husband took private notes of the fact that she was unkempt and collarless for the first time at their breakfast-table in the four years of married life.

"I will see what I can make of her. She broke the soup tureen in ten minutes after she entered the house."

"You must expect some such little inconvenience, my dear.

"Be philosophical, and remember there is nothing so bad that might not be worse."

"I remembered it, George, when she broke the tureen.

"But when she spilled the contents of the gravy-boat on your dress-coat, that lay where you left——"

"Grease on my coat?—on my dress-coat? Where's the stupid?

"Where's my coat?

"Mrs. Bessemer, where's your management?"

"In a better place than your bump of order, I am sure.

"Why did you leave your coat on the lounge last night?

"I cannot go round after you, and wait on you George.

"Surely, I have enough to do; and you have as many pair of hands as I."

Mr. Bessemer had no answer ready, and he fell to eating his breakfast with a will.

"Annie," he said, presently, "don't you think our bill of fare is rather extensive? Muffins, eggs, chocolate, broiled ham.

"It seems to me you might economize on the table a little."

"If less will serve you it will me, I am sure."

"My dear," he returned cheerily, "a cup of good coffee, a slice of toast, and a morsel of bacon—how's that?

"Cheap, good, easy to procure."

Annie laughed.

"So let it be. Bacon, toast and coffee tomorrow, morning.

"And what shall we have for dinner, under this new regime?"

For the third time Mr. Bessemer wondered if she was making fun.

For the third time he was unable to tell.

"I take a light lunch in town, and we can have a simple dinner—say an Irish stew and rice pudding—eh?"

"Very well. Good-by, George. Georgie, kiss papa."

And so Mr. Bessemer started for the city.

And Annie?

It was after eleven o'clock when Annie entered the private office of Mr. Bessemer's establishment, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks flushed.

She nodded pleasantly to Mr. Williams, the book-keeper, as she sat down in the elegant red velvet arm-chair.

"How cozy the office is," she remarked. "It has been three months since I was here.

"Since then Mr. Bessemer has been making improvements, I see."

She glanced at the bright brussels carpet; the suit of red velvet; the handsome six-globed chandelier.

Annie smiled, then laughed so merrily that Mr. Williams joined her.

"It is so funny," she said.

"Do you know what it cost to fit up the office—in detail?"

For answer he handed her two bills; one for the carpet, the other for the furniture, brackets, and pictures.

She saw what the amount was, then gave them back.

"Mr. Bessemer has excellent taste. I like the office exceedingly well.

"Oh, what's this?"

She spied a door she never had seen before, and tried to open it.

Finding it fast locked, she turned to Mr. Williams.

He blushed a little, then fumbled in his pocket for the key which he handed to Annie.

"It's pretty for only men folks, Mrs. Bessemer, but it's very convenient."

Annie opened the door and saw—

A little room, with one window, draped with lace curtains, looped back with blue ribbons.

A marble-top wash-stand covered with a china toilet set.

Blue and white mats, and on the wall, under the glass, and over the top of the stand, a blue and white wall-guard.

Carpet to match the outer room covered the floor, and a rug lay before the stand.

For the life of her Annie could not repress a scream of laughter.

The next ten minutes tears rushed to her eyes.

Could it be possible George wanted to practice economy and plainness at home, and the while denying himself nothing?

And then she wondered if he did not intend to make up for plain bills of fare at home by delicious restaurant meals.

Annie felt strangely.

She was wounded to the very core.

But Annie had resolved on a lesson to her economising husband; and although it would be a task of weeks, she determined to "fight it out" on the line she laid down.

In the end, she knew she would convince him that she was right, and not extravagant in "gimcracks."

It was six weeks after this that Mr. Bessemer expected several friends in to spend an evening, and naturally enough, he took a tour of the rooms to see how things stood.

A full blaze of light filled the room, and as he entered the door with Annie on his arm, he stopped stark still.

"What on earth is the matter with that arm-chair?

"What is that big black spot on it? Patience alive! look at the tete-a-tete!

"On both ends a similar place! Annie, has George been in here with bread and butter?"

He turned severely to Annie as he spoke.

"Oh, no; I don't allow that. I think it is grease from your hair, dear.

"It used to be so on the tidies every Monday."

"You take it coolly. Why, woman, the furniture is ruined—ruined!"

"Of course it is ruined. I knew it would be when the tidies were taken off."

He stared at her a moment, then walked over to the mantel.

It was marble, and in the centre were several small, dull brown spots.

"What's that, I'd like to know? Perhaps it is grease off my hair!"

Annie laughed.

"Oh, no; but you made the marks laying down lit cigars.

"There used to be a receiver, you know."

"Humph! What else have I done, Mrs. Bessemer?"

He tried to be crushingly severe, but Annie was not to be crushed.

"Not much in here—only this on the piano, where you have set down the lamp when I was playing for you.

"The paraffine seems to have stained the rosewood terribly."

"I hate the plaguey lamps! I'll have gas in here to-morrow."

"I wouldn't George. Before I took away the pair of scarlet mats from the piano, the lamp never did any hurt—not in four years."

Was she quizzing him?

Inwardly he shook his head at himself.

"Come up stairs a minute, George. I've lighted the lamp, and I want you to see how nicely the bedrooms look."

She took his arm, and chatted merrily as they went up, and then she led him deftly past the bureau, biting her lips as she watched his keen eyes alight precisely where she wanted them to.

"Annie! what does this mean?"

He dropped her arm, and pointed to the stained marble top, where there were a hundred little rings of dull, dirty hue.

"Why, it must be where you've set down your toilet-bottles.

"I declare, see how the bottoms of the bottles fit the marks."

She very innocently looked up in his face that began to take on a curious, half-quizzical look.

Then he went across the room to the washstand.

"Since I am on a tour of investigation. I will see how many marks of soapsuds I have left here. Humph!"

Sure enough the washstand looked very shabby; and the wall before it was spattered in a thousand places.

He looked a moment; then half smiled.

"Well, I suppose I am to admit that gimcracks are cheaper than ruined furniture—eh?"

"Don't you find it saves the office things, dear?"

Annie fired off her biggest gun so calmly, so affectionately; but George started, colored fairly red—purple; then, seeing the laugh gathering in his wife's eyes, and on her saucy lips, he collapsed suddenly.

"Beaten, with my own weapons, too! Little wife, fetch out the pretties, and lets cover up these tracks of my foolishness; and we'll regard them as flags of triumph for you."

"I was wrong, Annie, and you were right—you're always right.

"Your little ornamental articles were not only beautiful, but actually saved money by keeping our furniture always new. You will forgive me?"

"If you will take this as a peace-offering for my having invaded your office."

She handed him the velvet slippers, laughingly.

"You dear little woman," he said, and tried to catch her, but she was off to redecorate her house before her guests came.

It was not Irish stew and rice pudding she gave them for dinner; nor only coffee and toast for breakfast; and the very next day Mr. Bessemer searched for and found their old cook and maid.

And so Annie sits and sings and sews as happy as a bird.

Well Deserved.

BY F. B. NELSON.

EARLY morning at Tunbridge. A trim little row of white villas, and as much alike as peas in a pod.

Gardens—brilliant, diminutive diagrams—stood before each, lace curtains fluttered at the windows.

Though not suggestive of massive bank-accounts, there was an air of conservatism, of quiet elegance, round these little white villas that said much for the social standing of their inmates.

A gentleman sauntering leisurely along the road paused to look up at one of the houses and laid an irresolute hand on the wicket-gate.

"By Jove!" in murmured amazement, after his surprised survey, "she's taking life quietly for an heiress!

"Rusticating in a doll's house. Wonder if it's too early to call?

"Perhaps this isn't the house. Ah, there's the servant! I'll ask her."

He went up the path, a good-looking, fair-haired young fellow, faultlessly dressed, from his immaculate linen to the one pink rose in his button-hole.

"Ah—I beg your pardon, but will you tell me if Miss Leigh lives here?"

The girl addressed within the low parlor-window paused, broom in hand.

She wore a blue calico dress, and her head was covered with a handkerchief.

"Miss Leigh? Yes, sir."

The elegant lounger at the window drew a slight silver case from his pocket.

"You will take her my card?"

And then he said to himself—

"What a deuced pretty girl!"

Yes, looked at a second time, she was pretty.

Slim and straight as an arrow—a youthful, mobile face, with little, curling, red-gold rings clustering round the white forehead, and a pair of proud, sensitive, scarlet lips.

She turned and left the room, the card in her hand.

And Alfred Randall lazily beheaded the flowers within his reach, on his lips that slow, satisfied smile that said so much for his self-appreciation.

"Miss Leigh begs to be excused sir. She cannot see you this morning."

A pretty face always played havoc with Randall's common sense.

All that was lightest and most contemptible in the man rose to the surface at sight of the shy, girlish face before him.

He bowed, with a look that said more than any words—

"As I have seen you, Miss Leigh's cruelty is not so keenly felt as it might otherwise have been."

The girl started—a hot indignant color flaming into her cheeks.

Then, repressing herself with an effort, she simply smiled.

After that Alfred Randall called every day at the villa.

Every day Miss Leigh refused to see him.

But as days glided into weeks he almost forgot to inquire for the lady of the house when he called.

For a gentleman who had come down to Tunbridge with the determined resolution, the avowed intention, of marrying the heiress of twenty thousand pounds, it was rather a change to find himself head-over-ears in love with the servant of the said lady, who probably did not possess a thousand pence.

For Alfred Randall, the fastidious, elegant lion of many seasons, who just now was existing on nothing per annum, paid quarterly, and great expectations, had lost his heart to pretty Annie Farley, Miss Leigh's maid.

"It's very strange Miss Leigh won't see me," he said to her, one day, in his most confidential mood. "You know her family and mine were old friends, and I ought to have a footing here, even if no other fellow has."

"But perhaps another fellow has," demurely.

"Who?"

She nodded her pretty head sagely.

"Mr. Sherwin."

"No!" amazedly.

"Yes," convincingly.

He remembered now having met him once or twice leaving the villa—a great, tall, brown-bearded fellow, with the step of a soldier, the air of a gentleman.

"Pshaw!, he's not the kind of lover Miss Leigh would fancy——"

"He's a straightforward gentleman!" flared up Annie Farley.

"Hallon!" catching her hands in sudden surprise. "Take care; I shall be jealous."

"Be jealous of Miss Leigh then."

"Ah, that's so. I suppose she is my destiny.

"But I love you dearly, Annie, and would a thousand times rather marry you to-morrow——"

"Are you sure it will be such an easy matter to win Miss Leigh?" quietly.

"Well," conceitedly, "I guess so. You see, I've an effective, persuasive manner with your sex that works wonders. As I said before, I love you Annie, but you know a fellow must live up to his creed, and——"

"The man who tells a woman he loves her, without at the same time asking her to be his wife, offers her insult!" the girl said, in a tone strange and new to him, and with a swift motion she turned and walked rapidly away.

He stood quite still and looked after the vanishing figure in the pale blue lawn.

"By Jove!" he said to himself, dumbfoundered for once in his life—"by Jove!"

* * * * * *

Breezeless July, burning August, came and went.

On one cool, mellow, delightful September day came a note to Alfred Randall.

He read it over once or twice in sheer amazement.

A jaunted invitation, on thick, creamy paper, monogrammed in blue and gold—an invitation to a reception at Miss Leigh's.

The chance lost at Tunbridge might be regained now.

Funds were low, and he had heard she was good-looking to make marrying her no sacrifice.

From the hour Annie Farley had walked indignantly away from him at Tunbridge he had seen neither mistress nor maid at the villa.

The door had been opened by a strange servant, who had persistently denied him.

That night, at ten, his cab stopped before a handsome house.

Elegant, languid, well-dressed, Alfred Randall went into the long, brilliant rooms, into the magic of music, the fragrance of flowers, the murmur of conversation.

He went up to his hostess, who stood under the grand chandelier.

She turned towards him—a tall, stately, gracious woman.

What a radiant vision—trailing draperies of blue and silver; the milk-white glimmer of pearls; eyes bright, bewildering, blue as forget-me-nots; proud, smiling, rose-red lips.

"What—Annie Farley!"

He staggered back in blind amazement.

Out rippled Annette Farley Leigh's clear bell-like laugh.

"The same. Cannot an heiress, especially an unexpectedly-created one, dust her own parlor occasionally?

"Perhaps it was a rash act, but it taught me a wise lesson. Excuse me they are asking me to sing."

And as she turned away, on Heaton Sherwin's arm, the stateliest, loveliest woman in the room, one man felt, to its fullest extreme, the punishment his conceit deserved.

How He Was Won.

BY RANDALL W. HAYLE.

"WELL, John, although you knew I had other plans for you, you've suited yourself, and now you may look forward to helping yourself, for not one penny of my money will you get; and mind that you never bring that girl into this house."

"Father, do not be so hard. John hasn't deceived us, for he told us a year ago that he had seen a girl he would like for his wife."

"Ay, and I told him then that no stuck-up, useless city girl would be welcomed by me as a daughter, and I meant it then even as I mean now all I have said. Do you hear and understand, John?"

The young man addressed was a fine specimen of the human race, with a tall stalwart figure, and a face full of character.

All through his father's angry words he had kept silent, and now as he spoke there was a tone of pained disappointment in his voice.

"So you cast me off, father, and condemn my wife unseen?"

"Ay," came the answer sternly, "you've put it right."

Then the kitchen-door slammed to with a clang, and mother and son were left alone.

The young man went over to the old lady's side.

Her gentle face was covered with her hands, but he could see the tears trickling through her fingers.

He laid his hand on her grey head with a loving touch.

"Do not grieve, mother," he said. "Father is angry now, but time will change that.

"Do not worry for me, dear, for you know I am amply able to care for myself.

"I don't want father's money, only his affection.

"As I've done nothing to deserve its loss, I know that sooner or later it will be mine again.

"But I must go now. Good-bye, dear; I will write."

It was just a year ago—when John Andrews, with his father's consent, had left the farm to take a situation in the neighboring city, that he had first met Miss Witherington.

Their acquaintance had rapidly ripened into friendship, and then into love, and the two young people had become betrothed.

Miss Witherington was a school-teacher, and the support of an aged mother, whose sudden death two weeks before our story opened had hastened the marriage.

John knew well his father's aversion to what he called a "city girl," and, wishing to avoid remonstrance, and relying on his love for him for future pardon, had decided not to inform him of his marriage until it should be an established fact.

His betrothed, lonely, and full of grief for her loss, had been only too glad to fly to his outstretched arms for the comfort she so needed.

But John had found his father more implacable than he had expected, and the result of his first visit home after his marriage we have seen.

A year went by.

John's salary was but a moderate one; but within their tiny home, where love and content were the chief elements, the young people were as happy as mortals seldom are beneath the stars.

One thing alone cast a shadow upon their sunshine.

That John felt keenly the estrangement between himself and his father his wife could easily see, and the thought that it was through her that it had been brought about was an unhappy one.

In the meantime things at the Andrews Farm had not gone on quite as smoothly as usual.

It had not been very long before the old farmer had repented his harsh words, and would willingly have had them unsaid; but his pride had kept him from acknowledging that such was the fact, even though he saw his dear wife's face daily growing sadder and sadder, and knew the reason.

But at length an anxious time came, in which all else was swallowed up in the fear of the calamity which each moment seemed to [illegible]

The mistress of the farm—the gentle, tender being whom every one loved—was lying stricken down by a grave illness.

Thus it happened that one week's issue of the *Village Chronicle* contained the following advertisement—

"WANTED.—At the Andrews Farm, a capable young woman, to care for an invalid, and superintend the household."

* * * * * *

It was a hard and protracted struggle, but in the end life conquered, and Mrs. Andrews was pronounced out of danger.

"You may thank Mrs. Shirley quite as much as my skill for your wife's recovery," Dr. Powers, the village physician, said, as with tears rolling down his weather-beaten cheeks, the old farmer grasped his hand and tried to utter his gratitude.

And it was true, for if ever there was born a nurse, it was the young woman, with her soft, sweet voice, noiseless footfall, and deft, tender fingers, who had come in answer to the advertisement which in his stead Mr. Andrews had caused to be inserted in the paper.

But the weeks of convalescence had flown by, and the young stranger, who had fitted herself so naturally into the house ways that it seemed as if her stay had been years instead of only a couple of months, announced her thoughts of departure.

"Do not go yet, Mrs. Shirley; I cannot spare you," the old lady pleaded.

[illegible] to sudden illness.

"Do not go at all," Farmer Andrews supplemented.

"This old house needs livening up. I feel that we owe to you more than money can repay.

[illegible] daughter, if you will, and let our affection prove to you our gratitude."

An expression of deep feeling passed over the young face, as, rising, she clasped the old lady's hand within her own.

"What you ask, my kind friends, is impossible," she said softly, "for I have duties which prevent. I have seen that you have looked upon me as a widow. Mr. Andrews," she continued, "and I have not before corrected you; but I will now. My mourning dress is for my mother, who died but a short while ago. My husband is living, and it is to him that I must return."

Mr. Andrews' tone showed the surprise he felt, as he exclaimed—

"Your husband is living, and yet you answered my advertisement?"

A flush, [illegible] of embarrassment, overspread the fair features before his gaze, and noticing it, Mrs. Andrews hastened to interfere—

"Of course, my dear, now that we know that you have other ties, we cannot urge our request, although, thinking you alone in the world, I had set my heart upon keeping you with me, and am deeply disappointed."

A week later, with tearful eyes, Mrs. Andrews pressed her young nurse's hand in farewell.

A month went by, and one day a letter came to Mr. Andrews from his son.

It was like the writer, manly and to the point.

"I am too happy to ever repent the step I took in marrying," he said, "but I acknowledge that it was wrong in me not to have first gained your approval and consent.

"Father, do you not think that our estrangement has lasted too long already? Only send me one word of forgiveness and I will come to you directly."

And that word was sent.

Pride is a weed of rank growth, and old Farmer Andrews had possessed his full share of it, but it had been pruned out of his heart forever by the sickle of the grim reaper, who, passing over his home, had so nearly snatched from him his dearest and best-beloved.

It is afternoon, the farm sitting-room is a marvel of shining cleanliness and comfort.

A cheery fire is burning in the grate, and flowers fill the old-fashioned vases upon the mantel.

The sole occupants of the room are Farmer Andrews and his wife, and there is an evident air of expectancy in their bearing.

"I wonder if she sees anything much nicer than this in the town?" the old man says, as he looks around his pleasant domain.

By which speech it is plain that there still lingers in his mind that prejudice against city ways and city-bred people which a life spent wholly amid rural scenes and pursuits has fostered.

But that prejudice is destined to be left at rest forever.

A ring comes upon the bell, the door opens, and there enters two figures, one—yes, both—familiar.

"Father, mother, forgive us our deception," cries John's voice.

"This is Mrs. Shirley, my wife—you wished her for a daughter, and Fate has been kind and given her to you for one."

Such a scene as ensues, pen cannot do it justice.

"But how came you, a city girl, to know so much about farm life?" the old man asks in a puzzled tone, when time has calmed a little the agitation caused by the re-union and the surprise.

Shirley smiles.

"I lived upon a farm until I was nineteen—until my father died," she explains.

If he were to be asked, Farmer Andrews could hardly say now that the old homestead needs "livening up," for it is vocal each moment with the music of more than one merry voice, and John's and Shirley's boy's and girls are never better pleased than when their grandfather tells to them the story—which he relates with the utmost veracity, in no wise sparing himself—of how he was won in spite of himself.

MAKING POSTAGE STAMPS.—Some things are so common that few apprehend the ingenuity and labor required to make them.

Postage stamps for instance, are in everybody's mouth, except the wise ones, who use a wet sponge, but scarcely any one knows how they are manufactured.

In printing them steel plates are used, on which two hundred stamps are engraved.

Two men are kept hard at work covering them with the colored inks, and pressing them to a man and girl, who are equally busy at printing them with large rolling hand-presses.

After the small sheets of paper upon which the two hundred stamps are engraved have dried enough they are sent into another room and gummed.

The gum used is a peculiar composition, made of the powder of dried vegetables mixed with water, which is better than any other material, for instance gum arabic, which cracks the paper badly.

The paper is also of a perfect texture, somewhat similar to that used for bank-notes.

After having been again dried, this time on little racks, which are turned by steam power, for about an hour, they are put between sheets of pasteboard and pressed by hydraulic presses, capable of applying a weight of two thousand pounds.

The next thing is to cut the sheets in half; each sheet of course, when cut, contains a hundred stamps.

This is done by a girl, with a large pair of shears, cutting by hand being preferred to that of machinery, which method would destroy so many stamps.

They are then passed to other squads, who, in as many operations, perforate the sheets between the stamps.

Next they are pressed once more, and then packed and labeled and stowed away in mail-bags for dispatching to fill orders. If a single stamp is torn, or in any way mutilated, the whole sheet of one hundred is burned.

About five hundred thousand are burned every week from this cause.

IN TEXAS when a man wishes to cut an acquaintance, his procedure is simple. He uses a bowie knife.

Warning Symptoms.

Don't neglect these [illegible] if you have symptoms of Consumption, [illegible], Bronchitis, Neuralgia, or the [illegible] of any other disease which may [illegible] upon you until it becomes [illegible] neglect, [illegible] to [illegible]. Most the enemy [illegible], [illegible] your vitality is yet unimpaired. If your regular physician fails to reach the case, then we advise you to try the new Vitalizing Treatment of Drs. Starkey & Palen, 1109 Girard st., Philadelphia. It will be found to [illegible] restoration—the way back to health—an agent that may save you from a life of invalidism, or from premature death. In saying this, we are not speaking lightly, nor from mere professional interest, nor from theory or general assumptions. In proof, you are offered an army of facts and so large, so well authenticated, and so positive, that no one in the habit of weighing evidence can doubt them. If you write to Drs. Starkey & Palen, they will send you [illegible] you to [illegible] for yours [illegible] this treatment will benefit you.

New Publications.

"The Son of Monte-Cristo," being the sequel to "The Wife of Monte-Christo," and the end of the continuation of Dumas' masterwork "The Count of Monte-Christo," just published by T. B. Peterson & Brothers, is in all respects a great novel. Romantic in the highest degree, powerful in the widest sense of the term and absorbingly interesting it is a work absolutely without parallel at the present day. Every chapter has a strong and stirring feature of its own, while all the legions of intensely thrilling incidents are as original and surprising as they are strong. T. B. Peterson & Brothers, Philadelphia, Pa. Price 75 cents.

MAGAZINES

Arthur's Home Magazine has the following contents for June: Frontispiece: Watercarrier and Women of Morida; Yucatan, Illustrated; Chestnut Stamps, Illustrated; Music and Musicians; A Blossom Song; Living Light, Illustrated; Happiness; Lethia's Garden, Illustrated; Out of Pity; One Woman's Lifetime, Chapter I; Mrs. Barker's Wood; One of Shakspeare's Characters; To Marry or Not to Marry—Which?; How Women Can Earn Money; Religious Reading; etc., etc. Arthur & Son & Co., Philadelphia Pa.

There are four profusely illustrated papers in the June *Century*, and four full page pictures. The illustrated papers are, A French American Sea-port; Sailors' Snug Harbor; American Wild Animals in Art; and Commerce in the Colonies. The leading unillustrated articles are Diary of an American Girl in Cairo during the War of 1862; What is a Liberal Education? and The Use and Abuse of Parties; Topics of the Time; discuss the Cincinnati riot and our militia. In Open Letters Dr. Chas. S. Robinson continues his series on church music with What the Choirs Say; Prof. Ritter and Richard Grant White break lances over Music in America. In fiction, Henry James's new story, Lady Barberina, and Mr. Cable's Dr. Sevier are continued; and Robert Grant's story of An Average Man is concluded. A short story by H. C. Bunner is entitled The Red Silk Handkerchief. The poetry is contributed by Kenyon Cox, Dr. T. W. Parsons, Miss Emma Lazarus, John Vance Cheney, Christopher P. Cranch, Richard Watson Gilder, and Mrs. Helen Jackson (H. H.), and there are several clever and amusing poems in Brie-a-Brac. The Century Co., New York.

The long-promised new cover appears on the June number of *The Manhattan* which may now congratulate itself on having as beautiful a cover as magazine ever had. The contents of the number are worthy of the cover. The frontispiece is an airy figure piece, entitled Spring. An American painter, Henry Roderick Newman, who has long lived in Florence, is the subject of the opening article, written by H. Buxton Forman. Another profusely and brilliantly illustrated article is a second paper on The Gunnison Country, by Ernest Ingersoll. There are four portraits, illustrating the first part of Retrospections of the American Stage, by John Bernard, a theatrical manager at Boston, in the early part of this century. Of Trajan the new novel, there is a striking instalment. Edgar Fawcett's Tinkling Cymbals, is concluded, and there are two short stories. The poetry comprises such names as Celia Thaxter, John Cheney and Louise Chandler Moulton. The departments are all well-filled. The Manhattan, New York.

The June *Magazine of American History* opens with an exquisite steel portrait of Washington from the original miniature painted by Mrs. Sharpless in 1796, never before given to the public. The leading illustrated article is one of great general interest [illegible] Newport, Rhode Island, and [illegible] the early part of General George W. Cullum, of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., and gives a complete history of the fortifications about Newport, with a dozen or more excellent maps. The second article is the Discovery of the Yellowstone National Park. The Rise of a Mechanical Ideal, is by Charles H. Dana. Lieut.-General Charles P. Stone contributes a readable paper, entitled A Dinner with General Scott in 1861. [illegible] Papers of Sir [illegible] and [illegible] Lafayette to Washington, [illegible] N. Y. are continued by Mr. Pierrepont, of Brooklyn, and the five [illegible] departments of Notes, Queries, Replies, Societies, and Book Notices, are usually entertaining. It is a strong and remarkably valuable number of an excellent periodical. Published at 30 Lafayette Place, New York City.

CLEAN up your back yards and heave your old tomato cans over the fence. Do unto your neighbors.

Important.

Philadelphians arriving in New York via Cortlandt Street Ferry by taking the 5th Avenue [illegible] Cortlandt [illegible] Depot, [illegible] Grand Central Depot, 42d [illegible] Depot, [illegible] Fourth Avenue [illegible] Depot, [illegible] Depot, [illegible] best and cheapest in the City. [illegible] can get better for the money at the Grand Union, than at any other first class hotel in the city.

Our Young Folks.

PRINCE CHARLIE.

BY P. R. NELSON.

"NO, I can't give up Prince Charlie, uncle."

"'Can't' isn't the word to be used by us, Pattie, with regard to giving up or resigning, because naught is really ours to hold or keep."

"But he's mine, the pony's mine; he can't be sold."

The small, passionate face of the speaker was raised to Mr. Lee's.

So many years lay between them—he sixty, and she nine; the elder looked down pityingly at the younger; he did not answer her directly, only sighed.

"[illegible]. Must he be sold, uncle?" asked the wilful little voice, breaking [illegible].

"Yes, dear, I [illegible] that is according to the letter of your father's will. All the valuables to be sold, the house let or sold."

The child made no answer to this, but stole away, with flushing cheeks, a small dark-robed shadow of a girl, unlike what a damsel of nine should be.

Perhaps her dear dead father had spoiled her by the very excess of his love—his wee dark-browed Pattie, who was given to him just before her mamma died and went away to heaven.

Ah, well! she and her tall elder sister, Mabel had been very happy all through those nine golden years which followed.

Now he—her papa—was dead and gone, and had willed that even Prince Charlie was to be sold from her.

Poor little sore-hearted mite, she knew not yet of that long letter her father had written to Uncle Phil—his uncle and hers—telling of his doubts and fears with regard to his darling.

Dying eyes are very clear-sighted, and he saw, when too late, where he had fallen in training his little daughter.

She was proud, self-willed, and capricious—"Deal with her gently but firmly, Uncle Phil, and may you and Aunt Jo be blessed," said that last wistful letter.

Yes, Pattie was to go and make her home with the elderly brother and sister, living at a farm in Somersetshire.

Their wee grand-niece would be very happy with them, while Mabel was away in Germany, learning to be independent, and perfecting herself in the German language.

The house was topsy-turvy, as nurse said, for to-morrow was the sale-day.

Uncle Phil was very thoughtful for the comfort of the two orphan girls; he would spare them the pain of seeing the household treasures scattered.

"Go clear away to Aunt Jo the first thing in the morning, my dears; nothing like early morning for a final leave-taking," said he in his cheery way.

So, on the morrow, when the sun was peeping over the hills, the sisters were [illegible], and going to the old beech orchard, to say "good-bye" to Prince Charlie.

And Pattie gave him a last dainty mouthful of herbage.

"Do you think he knows all Mabel?" she asked in a choking voice.

"Yes, dear I think he does," was the reply.

And one would have thought he did, looking into his mild, sorrowful eyes, and also that he understood why that ticket was fastened to his head, the sight of which made his little mistress's heart so heavy.

"Is it 'When shall we meet again?'" It was Harry Frewhley who spoke—a romping, ten-years-old friend of Pattie's, his merry face, which peered over a low hedge at them, all aglow with golden sunshine.

"Well good-bye, old lady."

They saw him dash the tears from his eyes, and go scudding away—dear, good, goodly, teasing Harry—this was his boyish farewell.

Then the last kiss was given to Prince Charlie, and they left him standing in the orchard [illegible] sunbeams.

Now Uncle Phil was lifting Pattie into the vehicle which was to take them to the station, the nurse was to see them safely to dear Aunt Jo's care.

It was very dreary, going out thus from home in the early morning to an untried home.

"Well, some folks have no Uncle Phil and Aunt Jo to go to, Miss Pattie; think of that," said good old nurse, and the words rang in the child's ears all through the long journey, the clatter of the train, as it whirled along, repeating them over and over; and anon it was no dream or delusion of a change, but a living reality; for there were with their Aunt Jo, standing with her on her own doorstep.

"So here's my little chicken come home to roost,"—this was that lady's greeting, so trim and neat in her black silk dress and [illegible].

"No, I am no chicken, Aunt Jo, and you mustn't say I am; don't mock at me,' said the petulant child, bitterly.

"[illegible]! as a princess Brother Phil has sent me?" asked Aunt Jo with a comical look at her two charges.

"No, madam," said poor little tired, spirited Pattie, her pale cheeks all burning with, for the sake of the dead, [illegible] nurse, in a hard whisper, grieved to see the pout on her darling's pretty lips.

"Yes! for the sake of the living and the dead."

Tears were in Aunt Jo's eyes as her kindly hand stroked Pattie's travel-stained cheek.

She made no reply but allowed Mabel to lead her in, and ere she slept she found out Aunt Jo would be some one to love, cling to, and grow very fond of.

The trial of parting with Mabel and nurse over, and Uncle Phil at home, the little girl roamed and wandered at her own sweet will about the pleasant neighborhood.

Sometime she craved for the dear old home, and wondered with a pang what was the fate of Prince Charlie.

She only spoke of him to her uncle once.

"It was cruel of papa to tell you to sell Prince Charlie," she said in her petulant, unthinking way.

"Child, would you speak hard words of the dead?" he answered; at which she sobbed till her very heart seemed breaking, and yet grieved her good uncle the next hour with her wilfulness.

"The child's temper wants curbing; she is very like a tangled weed," he remarked to his sister; and not many days after the curbing-time came.

"Don't go near the Lady's Pool, little maid, and whatever you do, don't stand on the bridge and lean over," was his kindly command, one morning, meeting her coming from the way of the woods.

The Lady's Pool lay in these same woods, a dark, dangerous pool of water, fathoms deep—"bottomless," said the villagers—a hapless lady was once said to have found her end there; an "uncanny" spot under the shadow of overhanging trees.

"Why not, uncle?" asked Pattie.

"[illegible] spot had an ill name, and is dangerous."

Strange to say, Pattie, in all her wanderings, had never lighted on the pool; now a child's curiosity, prompted by her usual wilfulness, set her longing to see and know for herself what this forbidden danger was like, so to speak, and chance, if we may use the word, led her close to it, all unwittingly, but a day or two after.

Oh! it was a dark, gurgling pool, flowing away somewhere underneath the ground; and she shivered and shook as her light tripping feet brought her to its brink.

Yes, and there was a bridge, with but one high protecting rail.

Ah, Pattie, look long at the fairy daylight, take a full breath of the sweet flower-scented air.

How can you slight the kindly bidding, given so short a time ago?

Her small, dark face put on its defiant expression; [illegible], she was on the bridge, the gloomy, swirling waters, with their mysterious out-going, beneath her feet.

Ah! she was leaning over, daring her own undoing.

"Back, little one!" cried a boyish voice, somewhere among the tangle of trees and underwood.

Did the voice startle her, or did her head turn dizzy?

A scream rings out, she is stooping over! there! there! she is in the dark mystery below!

The youth springs to the rescue.

Will he save her, and how?

The calm blue heavens look down between the trees.

The lad is holding to the bridge with one hand, hanging over the abyss—it is a minute of daring.

Once she rises, but she is stunned; he thinks her head struck a projecting stone. But as she thus rises he sees her dimly; he grasps her by the hair; he lands her on the bridge!

Woodmen come rushing up, guided by that ringing scream.

[illegible] her away, not to Aunt Jo's tender care, but to her young preserver's home hard by—a quaint, many-gabled mansion where young Oliver's grandmother, Mrs. Raymond, a white-haired lady leaning on a stick, receives them, and an elderly gentleman, his uncle, sends for a doctor.

Oliver himself sped away to Aunt Jo, and all the long afternoon and night Pattie lay stunned, bewildered, in a strange room, strangers about her, and Aunt Jo despairing of her life.

Then delirium set in; her head was sadly injured; some said young Oliver had saved her for naught—that she must die.

But no poor little Pattie was to live, and grow submissive and wise.

A little pale-faced mite, with shorn head, she sits at last in the shady bay-window of her chamber at Raymond Hall, Uncle Phil and Aunt Jo both beside her.

They have dressed her in a new riding-habit of blue cloth, and a little blue turban hat lies on a chair near, ready for her to put on.

And Prince Charlie stands, gentle as a lamb, by the portico below, Oliver stroking his sleek sides.

They can hear the pony's stamp, stamp, like a call to his little mistress to come to him once more.

"Child, there was once One who had said right loyally, 'Not My will, but Thine be done.'

"Have you learnt to say it, Pattie, in all this weary time of suffering?" asked Uncle Phil, gravely.

"Yes, uncle, I think I have. Have I Aunt Jo?"

It was a wistful little face upraised first to one, then to the other.

"Yes, dear, you are certainly learning to say it," was the reply; "I have seen it by the way you have borne your suffering."

"Hark! that is over exciting," said Pattie, her pale face flushing.

"And Prince Charlie's waiting," observed her uncle.

"But, first, I must clear up the mystery. I bought in Prince Charlie for you, my dear, but I think I was acting out your father's wish in withholding him.

"'Curb her little impatient heart,' he said in a long letter to me, which you shall some day read; 'better the pain and loss now than in the years to come.'

"And when I heard that word 'can't' spoken about giving up the pony, I thought, that was where in curbing must begin; he who can't give up with a good grace isn't worthy to hold.

"And so, and so——" Uncle Phil's voice was husky.

"Uncle, am I worthy now?" asked the child.

"Learning, dearie; no human being has ever been rightly worthy to have and to hold save Him who said so submissively, 'Not my will, but Thine, be done.'"

And so it was that, after many days, Pattie and Prince Charlie found each other again.

THE BIRTHDAY GIFT.

BY RANDALL W. BAYLE.

BLOSSY was seven years old that morning, and her birthday gift was a coral necklace with a diamond clasp.

A pretty trifle and a costly, for Blossy's father was a rich man.

Mounted on the cushion of a velvet chair, the dainty little lady surveyed herself in the great pier mirror, clasping and unclasping the necklace about her dimpled neck with all a child's delight over the possession of a new toy.

The voice of the footman from the hall attracted her attention.

"No, sir," he was saying emphatically, "nothing here for beggars. Take yourself off.

"I'm not a beggar," replied a plaintive voice.

"I never begged before in my life; but my mother's so sick, and the baby is freezing——"

"No matter—they all tell that tale—be off!" cried the aristocratic footman, and the hall door closed with a bang.

Blossy hopped from her perch like a sparrow, and was at the front window in a breath, pressing her rosy face and golden curls against the plate-glass.

It was snowing, and a bitter wind was blowing, and down below on the marble steps a little boy stood, sobbing as if his heart would break.

Blossy could just see him through the glass, and her sapphire eyes dilated with childish wonder.

She dropped her pretty corals, and tugged with all the might of her two arms at the heavy sash.

Up it went at last, and the snow came whirling in, almost taking away her breath.

But Blossy did not mind the snow.

She stood it bravely, and leaning out, peered down at the little wanderer below.

"Little boy what's the matter?"

The child, shivering in his threadbare garments, and dreading to go forth into the winter storm, started up in amazement at the sound of the little bird-like voice.

Looking up, framed like a rare picture in the lofty window of the grand mansion, he saw Blossy's rosy face and flossy curls.

"Little boy," she cried again, "what do you want? What makes you cry?"

"I am hungry, and my mother's sick, and we've no money to buy anything to eat, and the baby's freezing, 'cause we've got no fire," sobbed the little boy.

Blossy's pearl-white brow contracted in a thoughtful frown.

What could she do to relieve the little sufferer?

Her child heart was tenderly compassionate.

If papa were only at home.

But he was not, and Blossy's lady mother, lounging in her elegant boudoir, with a French romance in her hand, was not the woman to take an interest in a beggar.

Blossy's childish instinct told her this; she had no idea of applying to mamma.

A dim thought of making a raid on the pantry filled her curly head, and with an emphatic—

"You wait little boy," she bounded down from the window.

The coral necklace, on the Turkish rug, attracted her attention.

She caught it up with a cry of childish delight, and flew back to the window.

"Here, little boy," she cried, "this is my birthday gift, and papa said it cost ever and ever so much; do you run and sell it back, and you'll get money, and then your mother won't starve, and your little baby won't freeze."

And down through the white, whirling snow flashed the jewelled necklace, and fell tinkling on the marble steps at the boy's feet.

He picked it up, and raised his eyes in a bewildered way to the sweet face above him.

"Run said," Blossy, "run, I say, and sell it back, and buy something for your mother.

"You may have it, and I know papa won't mind."

The little boy below, not knowing what else to do, closed his cold, brown fingers over the costly trinket, and ran home with all possible speed.

The merchant's sumptuous dinner was over, and he sat in his drawing-room, with the evening paper before him.

His wife, in satin and jewels, reclined upon a silken divan.

Blossy came tip-toeing down from the nursery, and put her sunny head in at the door.

"Papa, may I come in?"

"Yes, yes, pet," replied the merchant, "I've been expecting you this last half hour."

"No," interposed the mother, from her divan.

"Blossy's in disgrace. What do you suppose she did to-day, my dear?

"She gave that lovely necklace to a beggar—dropped it from the window to a common street beggar! She's enough to drive one insane."

"Oh I don't mind. You are a good, generous little girl," exclaimed her father, kissing her tear-wet cheeks, "and papa loves you for it, and will buy you another necklace."

The indignant lady went rushing from the room, and at the same instant a servant appeared in the opposite direction.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but there's a lad out here who will insist on seeing you. I've done my best, but he declares it's important, and won't go."

"Show him in," commanded the merchant.

And in a breath a little boy entered, his well-worn hat in his hand.

"I've come sir," he began at once, his brown eyes clear and fearless, and extending a little parcel to the merchant as he spoke, "to return this, and to beg you not to think hard of me. The little girl there," his fine eyes lighting as they rested on Blossy, still on her father's knee, "threw it down to me this morning."

Blossy made a swift clutch at the package, as she slid from her father's knee.

"Wait Blossy," interposed her father. "You shall keep your pretty necklace, and we'll give your little friend something more available.

"Here, give him this."

He drew out his purse, and took from it some gold, which Blossy pounced upon eagerly, and put in the boy's hand.

"I thank you, sir," he said; it will be a fortune to my poor mother. But he added, hesitatingly, "I'm not a beggar—only I couldn't see her and the baby suffer so. If you would let me work—if there was anything I could do.

"I'm a handy boy, sir, if I do say it myself."

The merchant's keen grey eyes softened.

"So you would like to work for it, would you?" he said.

"Very well; come to my place of business to-morrow morning, and we'll see. Here's my card."

"All right, sir—and a thousand thanks to you and the little girl too."

Twenty years after that wintry evening, a great financial failure shook the commercial world, and some of the best firms toppled and went over.

* * * * * * *

With the rest was the great firm owned by Blossy's father.

Her mother had died a year or two previous, and Blossy alone was left to comfort and support her invalid father.

A rare and radiant maiden was little Blossy—the sweet bud had bloomed into a peerless flower.

She let them all go—all her pretty, girlish ornaments—and the old coral necklace, with the diamond clasp, was among them.

She went down to the seaside with her poor father, but the salt winds did not invigorate him.

He sank perceptibly day by day, and one sultry summer night found him dying.

Blossy sat by his bedside in the little cottage.

A tap at the door interrupted them, and Blossy, upon opening it, faced a tall and handsome gentleman.

"I must beg your pardon, Miss Ross, for this untimely intrusion. You have forgotten me, no doubt, but your father, my oldest, my best friend——"

Blossy uttered a sudden cry, and put out both her hands.

"I know you now," she cried, and papa has talked of you so incessantly. "I am so glad you have come."

She led him to the bedside.

The old merchant looked up, and his dim eyes lit with joy.

"Why, Howard, my boy," he exclaimed, "have you come?—and at the very hour of my need."

The young man sat down, and took his old friend's hand in both his own.

It required but a few words to tell his story.

From the position of errand boy in the great city warehouse he had gone straight up, and now he was the junior member of a wealthy firm, just returned from Calcutta.

Arriving in London, he had heard of his old benefactor's misfortunes, and had lost no time in following him.

But he found him beyond all mortal help.

"My days are number," said the old merchant, solemnly.

"I am willing to go, only for Blossy—who will care for her?"

The young man's bronzed cheeks flushed.

Blossy was weeping with her face hidden in the pillows, but at her father's call she put out her hand.

The young man grasped it and drew her to his bosom.

That night Mr. Ross died, and one year afterwards saw Blossy the happy wife of Howard.

A young man sent fifty cents to a New York advertiser to learn "How to make money fast," and was advised to glue a five dollar greenback to the bottom of his trunk.

AWAKENING.

I think I could do without you,
  Perhaps, while the sky is fair;
And the infinite smile of summer
  Glows in the golden air.
When earth with its myriad whispers
  Breathes in the ear of day
The secret of that great glory
  That awaits her far away.

For, indeed, there are fairer faces
  That shine more bright in the sun;
And voices whose tone, it may be,
  More smoothly and sweetly run.
And when over vale and meadow
  Peace like a mantle flows—
Who dreams of the distant battle?
  Who doubts the heart of the rose?

But when to a night of sorrow
  Rises a day of scorn;
When out of the smile comes treason,
  And out of the rose a thorn;
When the soul is sick with thinking
  Of the plots and wiles of men,
Of life and life's long travail—
  Could I do without you then?

O, heart! more true and tender,
  Than ever was heart before:
O, hand! whose faithful clasping
  Holds fast forever more;
O, sweet, pure soul! unchanging
  Through doubt, and love, and pain,
Shall I, so slow to know you,
  Now know at last in vain?

Behold! I come and whisper,
  Weary, and bruised, and hurt;
I plead for grace, not honor,
  For mercy, not desert.
Will you stretch your hand and lift me
  Out of my own unworth?
For I know I can do without you—
  Never again on earth!

GAMBLING OF OLD.

THE Cocoa Tree club in St. James' street had its origin in a Tory chocolate house of Queen Anne's days, and assumed the higher form of a club in 1746.

Members of parliament and persons high in life belonged to this club, which, it used to be said, exercised a very important influence on the course of politics.

In those days members of parliament were not always above taking a bribe, and many of the Cocoa Tree gentlemen were only too easily induced to accept bank notes for two or three hundred pounds each, when the ministry, hard pushed, were obliged to resort to such a device to obtain support; and the peace of Fountainebleau is alleged to have cost the government in this way, $25,000.

Gambling also went on to a fearful extent at the Cocoa Tree.

Horace Walpole relates, in 1780, that a Mr. O'Birne, an Irishman, won $100,000 from a young Mr. Harvey, "You can never pay me," said O'Birne.

"I can," replied the young fellow, "my estate will sell for the amount."

"No," said the Irishman, "I will take $10,000, and we will throw for the odd ninety."

They did, and Harvey won. At most of the fashionable clubs of the last century gambling was carried on in the most reckless manner. In the club book of Almack's there is this note:

"Mr. Flynne, having won only 12,000 guineas during the last two months, retired in disgust March 21, 1772."

To lose $20,000 in one evening was not unusual.

Generally, $10,000 in specie lay on the table. A curious account is given of the way these desperate gamblers used to equip themselves for the sport.

They took off their embroidered coats, put on frieze garments, protected their lace ruffles with pieces of leather, shaded their eyes with broad brimmed straw hats adorned with flowers and ribbons, and wore marks "to conceal their emotions!" That suicide was not an unfrequent result of such high plays can hardly be wondered at.

Lord Mountford, a member of White's, where the gambling was fearful, got so terribly involved that he determined to ask for a government appointment, and, failing that, to take his own life.

He did fail, and after asking several persons what was the easiest mode of dying invited some friends to dinner on New Year's day, having supped the evening before at White's, where he played at whist until one o'clock in the morning.

A fellow member drinking to him a happy new year, "he clapped his hand strangely to his eyes."

In the morning he sent for a lawyer and three witnesses, made his will with great deliberation, and then asked the lawyer if it would stand good though he were to shoot himself.

The answer being yes he said, "Pray stay while I step into the next room," and then, retiring, shot himself dead.

Captain Gronow relates that, about this time,

Lord Robert Spencer and General Fitzpatrick were allowed to keep a faro bank at Brookes's, and that the former bagged, as his share of the proceeds, $100,000; after which he never again gambled.

George Harley Drummond, the banker, only played once on his life, when he lost $30,000 to Brummell, and was obliged to retire from the firm.

In the first half of the eighteenth century ladies of title kept gambling houses. An entry in the journals of the House of Lords dated April 29, 1745, shows that Ladies Mornington and Cassilis claimed privilege of peerage in resisting certain peace officers in doing their duty, "in suppressing the public gambling houses kept by the said ladies;" but the claim was not allowed.

Betting, also, was indulged in at the clubs with as much frantic zest as play.

Anything served as an excuse, and sometimes the occasion of the bets were so shocking that men of less decency would have shrunk from associating them with any form of amusement.

A man dropped down at the door of White's, and was carried into the house; immediately the betting harpies were staking large sums on the question whether he was dead or not.

When it was proposed to bleed him, those who had taken odds that life was extinct protested against such a course, on the ground that it would affect the fairness of the bet.

Grains of Gold.

There is more vanity and caprice in taste than in intelligence.

Let us learn upon earth those things which call us to Heaven.

Jealousy is the sentiment of poverty, but envy is the instinct of theft.

Peace is such a precious jewel that one would give anything for it but truth.

To count but few things necessary is the foundation of many virtues.

Enjoy your own life without comparing it with that of another.

A slip of the foot may be soon recovered, but that of the tongue perhaps never.

Gratitude and hope should make us faithful and fruitful.

Goodness overacted can only secure very transient regard.

Beware of the man or woman who assumes perfection.

De billy-goat gits in his hardes' licks when he look like he gwine to back out of a fight.

De buggy whip can't make up for light food in de horse trough.

As the world makes real progress, less homage will be paid to so-called-genius and more to moral goodness

Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of will than of habit.

Self-denial is the most exalted pleasure, and the conquest of evil habits the most glorious triumph.

Without discretion, learning is pedantry, and wit, impertinence; virtue itself looks like weakness.

Good-temper is the philosophy of the heart, a gem in the treasury within, whose rays are reflected on all outward objects.

One of the strongest reasons why certain persons profess to hate the Bible, is that the Bible hates what they are doing all the time.

Those who are most weary of life, and yet are most most unwilling to die, are such who have lived to no purpose, who have rather breathed than lived.

Beware of quarrels. They are often raised about the merest trifles; and yet, when once begun, are with the greatest difficulty imaginable brought to a friendly conclusion.

Never speak evil of another while under the influence of envy and malevolence, but wait till your spirits are cooled down, and you may better judge whether to utter or suppress the matter.

Whatever the world may say, there are some mortal sorrows, and our lives ebb away less through our blood than through our tears.

Nothing will supply the want of sunshine to peaches, and, to make knowledge valuable, you must have the cheerfulness of wisdom.

When you measure aught give full measure and weight with a just balance. One hour of equity better than seventy years of devotion.

It is not the flower has fallen off that the fruit begins to ripen. So in life it is when the romance is past that the practical usefulness begins.

Femininities.

An art exhibition—a maiden flirting.

Boston girls are organizing walking clubs.

A bachelor is a man who has lost the opportunity of making a woman miserable," so says a probable old maid.

The young lady from Vassar does not speak of a clammy sweat, but of a bivalvular transpiration.

No man can obey two masters, but frequently he has to obey both his wife and his mother-in-law.

"A Wife's Greatest Trial" is the title of a new book. We have not read it, but suspect that it is her husband.

Handpainted bonnets with parasols to match will be much worn at watering-places. Handpainted complexions will be worn as usual.

A Japanese woman dresses her hair only once in four days. This gives the rest of the family an occasional glance at the mirror.

"If angels ever condescend to walk the earth it is when clad in the form of good mothers," says an eminent writer.

Marriages in Germany are rapidly diminishing in number. Increasing luxury in ways of living and increasing ill-health of women are said to be the chief reasons.

In the Paris Bon Marche, where 2000 persons are said to be employed, each girl has a room to herself. There is also a drawing room, with piano, etc.

Now is the time when the small boy in the country comes into the house with his hair all wet and tells his mother that he ran home from school so fast that he is all perspired.

A despairing swain, in a fit of desperation, recently declared to his unrelenting lady-love that it was his firm determination to drown himself, or perish in the attempt.

Lady Visitor—"Oh, that's your doctor, is it? What sort of a doctor is he?" Lady Resident—"Oh, well, I don't know much about his ability; but he's got a very good bedside manner."

She was young and had a pretty face and a Gainsborough hat, but when she asked if an apiary was not a place where they kept monkeys the spell was broken and the charm vanished.

When a wise man has to protect two ladies with one umbrella he always places himself between the pair. Then he is at least sure of saving his new hat.

There is a sign on a building at Los Angeles, Cal., which has been read by a woman, with the aid of an electric light, five miles out to sea. It must have been an ice-cream sign.

A young man in Troy, N. Y., is engaged to eighteen girls. He says he don't know what he is going to do, unless the calander is changed so as to have eighteen nights in the week.

Two female burglars were recently captured in London. They could have got away with their swag had they not stopped in the house to try on some new bonnets they found in a dressing-room.

What could be more cordial, and at the same time freer from offensive personal taint than the wedding wish of a Louisiana editor: "May they prove as good to each other as the cake and wine proved to us."

"If he was the last man on the earth I wouldn't marry him," said Ethel, impetuously. "No indeed, dear," replied Elfrida, calmly, "what would be the use of marrying when there was nobody to envy you!"

Women's rights took on a novel phase at San Jose recently, when Mrs. Dr. Lambert refused to testify in a case on the ground that she was not a citizen. She was committed to jail for contempt of court.

Female quadrupeds have more endurance than males. In the human race, despite the intellectual and physical strength of the man, the woman endures longest and will bear pain to which the strongest man succumbs.

"Do you believe that a woman nowadays would die for the object of her love?" asked a bachelor friend. "I don't know whether she'd die or not," answered the Benedick, "but I've known her to go wild when the trimming didn't suit her."

"What is more awful to contemplate," said the lecturer, glaring about him, "than the relentless power of the Maelstrom?" And a henpecked-looking man in the rear of the building softly replied: "The femalestrom."

"I don't see why you are so particular about your hair," said a churlish husband. "I don't suppose she did," replied the wife, with a quiet smile, "but then there was nobody in the world but her husband to admire her."

"Mary," said a mother to her daughter, "has Henry proposed yet?" "Not yet, ma, but I think he will before many days." "What makes you think so?" "Because he asked me if you expected to live with me if I married, and I told him no."

"Papa, I want to make mamma a present next Wednesday, because it is her birthday." "So it is, my child; I had forgotten it." "I want to give her something she hasn't got; can you think of anything?" "Yes, get her some patience."

"Why do they always paint angels as blondes?" asked Mrs. Krank of her husband, as they stood looking at a picture in the art gallery. "Because," answered Mr. K., looking at his wife's hair, "artists' wives are generally brunettes." There's a frigidity in the atmosphere about the Krank mansion now.

"Everybody must grow old, you know," said Mrs. Bass to her husband, who had been remarking upon the rapid aging of one of Mrs. B.'s dear friends. "Not everybody, dear," replied Bass; "everybody who lives long enough, you mean;" adding pathetically, "I should grieve to think that my sweet wife would ever grow old."

News Notes.

A Sioux Indian acts as a waiter at a Nantasket Beach hotel.

The Crown Princess of Prussia has a necklace of thirteen pearls which cost $63,000.

Base ball is fast taking the place of fighting in Cuba.

The cost of the American war is estimated at $6,500,000,000.

One plant of the dandelion is estimated to produce 2,750 seeds.

Utter misery was not born into the world until the first tight shoes were made.

About 125,000 elephants are annually killed in Africa to supply the ivory trade.

A "theatrical" mission has been started in London by the Salvation Army.

Women now serve on juries in Washington Territory.

Francis Murphy has secured 4050 temperance pledges in Chicago.

Illinois has 19,000 more boys than girls it is stated.

Cosmopolis, Wyoming, offers $100 premium for the first woman settler.

Decayed teeth, it is said, are frequently the cause of diseases of the eyes and ears.

There is an average of 843 people to an acre living in New York city.

Rome celebrated recently the 2637th anniversary of its foundation by Romulus.

In Washington county, N. Y., potatoes have been selling at 20 cents per bushel to the starch mills.

In Ireland, several of whose counties possess superior coal and iron, there is some talk of a revival of the iron trade.

Four years seem a long while to wait for a medal, but Lord Wolseley's Egyptian heroes only received theirs three weeks ago.

Minnesota is the greatest cold water state in the Union. It has within its borders 7000 lakes, covering an area of 2,700,000 acres.

Ostrich eggs boiled were recently among the attractions of a meal at a San Diego, Cal., hotel.

One and two dollar notes are reported to be as scarce in Washington as elsewhere.

Banana skins, a letter from Canton states are used by Chinese to black boots with.

Two brothers in Connecticut married sisters, and the first son of each couple was born on the 20th of February.

Vanilla, inordinately used, a French savan is said to have discovered, leads to a disease called "Vanillism."

A piece of property has just been sold in New York city at the rate of $220 per square foot.

A burglar got into the house of a lawyer the other day. After a terrible struggle the lawyer succeeded in robbing him.

The formation of a company called Eureka, for the purpose of finding lost articles, has been announced in France.

Ten cents a word is now the highest rate paid for telegraphing from one point to another in this country.

The widow of Tom Thumb is being wooed by John Spencer Coyne, a five foot mining operator of means.

To use monogrammed paper at this time is to be out of the fashion. Pale tinted papers and heraldic devices are "the thing."

The first application of a Chinaman in the United States for divorce has just been begun in the New York courts.

The total number of separate farms in the United States is 4,000,000, and their aggregate value is $10,000,000,000.

It is the custom among a certain caste of Hindoos, to cut off at the first joint the third and fourth fingers of a woman about to marry.

Trial by jury is going out in England. In one court alone, out of a total of 1,624 cases, no less that 444 are to be heard by a judge alone.

The 14-year-old daughter of George Wilhelm, of Lima, O., jumped the rope 284 times and fell unconscious. She lay in that condition for twenty days before she died.

A photographer at Versailles is said to have invented a method of taking photographs which retain all the colors of the scene reflected on the lens.

Frank Johnson, of Osceola, Ill., hid in a cave a year ago on the approach of a cyclone and cannot be made to leave his retreat. His wife carries provisions to him.

A newspaper editor has been seen to prison in Madrid for printing an article on tyranny, which the official censor afterwards found to be a quotation from Macaulay.

The chief engineer of the Vallejo (Cal.) Fire Department had his eye suddenly gouged out by a stream of water that was turned into his face during the progress of a fire.

A company in Connecticut manufactures nearly all the licorice used in this country—17,000,000 pounds a year. Confectionery and medicines take about 2,500,000 pounds, and the balance goes into tobacco.

Rufus Choate did not believe that good intellectual work was the result of inspiration: "Nonsense!" he said, "you might as well drop the Greek alphabet on the ground and expect to pick up the Iliad."

It requires ten cars to take $2,500 worth of grain to market, while the same value of butter can be carried in half a car.

THE REASON WHY.

Now the boys are in glee,
And as brisk as the bee,
While the blue welkin rings with their bawling;
And they sidle and lean,
Then they drop in a heap
In their bawling and mauling and sprawling.

One and a'l is the thrall
Of the fever, base ball;
They delight in its stages to linger,
Some, so agile and spry,
Catch the ball on the fly,
But catch it more oft on the finger.

Presto, change! with keen glance
They fall back or advance,
And grab for the ball swiftly fleeting;
But it breaks down their guard—
Hard some op'ics bombard—
Or meet their front teeth in a greeting.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Some may think, in amaze,
Why this base balling craze—
This bruising all over the nation?
May't not be nature's mind,
With green apples combined,
To cause the small boy's extermination?

—WM. MACKINTOSH.

A Family Tyrant.

BY F. E. WEATHERLY.

AH, dear me, dear me!" sighed Mrs. Copman. "What a world of trouble this is!"

Her son-in-law looked up from the newspaper he was reading.

He was a tall, handsome man of thirty, with soft, dark eyes and beretand there a silver streak in his hair.

"Is there any new trial developing itself?" he asked kindly.

"No," said Mrs. Copman; "nothing especial.

"Except that Marion wants the green parlor for a studio.

"There's such an excellent north light to it, you know."

"Well," said Henry Charteris, "why not let her have it?"

"But what shall we do for a reception-room?" said the old lady.

"Take my library," suggested he.

"My dear Henry! And all the books—what is to become of them? But dear Marion would be so delighted if only the plan were practicable."

"Put them in my bedroom," said Mr. Charteris absently.

"Floyd can easily knock up a few shelves there. It is a pity that Marion should be disturbed in the prosecution of her art."

"You are always so kind and thoughtful" said Mrs. Copman, brightening up, as she hurried away to give the necessary directions.

Floyd, Mr. Charteris' faithful Scotch servitor, stared blankly when the old lady issued her orders.

"My master's library," said he, "up to his bed-room? Wherever will I put the books?"

"Oh, there's plenty of room for a few shelves," said Mrs. Copman briskly. "And if there should be a volume or so left over, they can easily be put in the closet under the stairs, which has a good large window looking out over the stables."

Floyd whistled under his breath, but there was nothing for it but to obey.

"I never see such a mother-in-lawed house as this in all my life!" said he to the housekeeper, with a groan. "Here's Mr. Harry, crowded into the bedroom in the north wing, and the closet under the stairs, while Mrs. Copman and her three Gorgon-faced daughters have usurped the whole house, with their studios, and their music-rooms, and their boudoirs, and the mischief only know what all!"

The housekeeper shook her head.

"Ah, you may well say so," said she. "And that ain't the worst of it neither, Floyd."

"Eh?" said the old man.

"How long is it since Mrs. Charteris—poor lady—died?" mysteriously questioned Mrs. Akers.

"Sixteen—seventeen months, ain't it?" said Floyd. "But why?"

"Ah," said the housekeeper, "when the two years are up she'll make him marry one of the three sisters! You'll see!"

"But they're not one of them under forty and as plain as pikestaffs!" ejaculated Floyd, in dismay.

"You'll find as that won't make no difference" said Mrs. Akers, gloomily. "That's what she's got her eye on; as true as you're alive, Floyd.

"And she never yet failed in what she made up her mind to do."

While Mrs. Akers and Mr. Floyd were engaged in this discussion of family affairs, Mrs. Copman herself was cheerfully bustling about, ordering the maids, tormenting the footman, suggesting this, that, and the other thing to her three bony, high-cheeked daughters—Marion, Arabella, and Millicent—until, suddenly glancing up, she chanced to observe a light figure, clad in a pretty pink muslin, with a floating white scarf, enter the green-house door, across the garden.

She rang the bell energetically.

"Floyd," said she, "who is that—that person in the garden?"

"It is Miss Jetty Lane, the parson's daughter," said Floyd. "At least," coughing behind his hand it looked like her."

"And what is she doing in our green-houses, I'd like to know?" demanded Mrs. Copman hotly.

"She goes there to get flowers for her wax-works, ma'am," said Floyd. "My master——"

"Your master would allow himself to be preyed on by every one in the village, if he hadn't some one to protect him," said Mrs. Copman severely. "Go at once, Floyd—or stay! I believe I had better go myself. This sort of thing must be put a stop to."

And she hurried on to the green-house, where pretty Jetty Lane was culling sprays of white stephanotis in an unconsciously-graceful attitude, as she reached up among the glossy, dark-green branches for the star-like blossoms.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Copman stiffly, "Miss Lane, I believe?"

Jetty paused and turned.

Only home from boarding-school three months, she had never met Mrs. Copman face to face before.

"It's the terrible mother-in-law," she said to herself.

And she answered aloud—

"Yes. I am getting a few flowers to model in wax, and——"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Copman. "But perhaps you hadn't better get any more. The flowers don't bloom very profusely and my daughters like them for their hair. Besides Mr. Charteris doesn't approve of the whole neighborhood running riot through his grounds."

Jetty's deep-blue eyes flashed.

"Madam," said she, "did Mr. Charteris tell you to say this?"

"N-not exactly," faltered the sour-visaged widow; "but——"

"Then," said Jetty, "you have been guilty of a very rude and inhospitable action!"

And, flinging her white buds and blossoms on the tiled floor of the green-house, she walked out like a princess.

"Well I never!" said Mrs Copman, scarcely knowing whether to be most indignant or surprised at this imperial conduct.

While Jetty Lane hurried on, never stopping to shed the tears which seemed to scald her resolute eyelids until she was safe in the little hazel copse, and once there, under the cool, quivering boughs of the trees, she burst into a passion of tears.

"Miss Lane—Jetty!" uttered a remonstrating voice.

"Yes, I know," said Jetty, laughing and sobbing in the same breath. "I'm very foolish, and I ought to know better, but it isn't pleasant to be turned out of a place."

"What do you mean?" said Henry Charteris gravely.

And Jetty told him all.

A dark frown gathered over his countenance.

He had known that Mrs. Copman and his three sisters-in-law were selfish, arrogant, and domineering.

He had been quite aware that he was little more than a prisoner of state in his own home.

He had even formed some vague idea that Arabella, the youngest and least hard-favored of the three, had designs on his heart.

As far as he personally was concerned, it mattered not one straw; but now that innocent, dewy-eyed Jetty had been thus ruthlessly attacked, things assumed quite a different aspect.

He looked down upon the sweet, blushing face. He took both the little hands in his.

"Jetty," said he, "this is an uneven battle. One window and three resolute spinsters against an unprotected species of genus *homo*. Yet I think if I had an efficient lieutenant I could defeat the enemy yet. Will you join the ranks?"

"I—I don't think I understand you," faltered Jetty.

"You are eighteen—I am thirty," he went on. "And yet, Jetty, I feel young enough in my heart to be your match. Dear little Jetty, will you be my wife? Do you love me, Jetty?"

And Jetty bravely answered—

"Yes, I will be your wife, Mr. Charteris. I do love you. And," she added artlessly, "I have loved you ever since I first came home from school, and met you at the Sunday-school picnic under the maple trees."

Mrs. Copman and her three daughters had been to town to order their spring wardrobes—charged to Mr. Charteris' account, of course, and it was late on the afternoon of the third day of their absence when they returned cross, irritable, and tired—Marion a shade redder-nosed than usual, Arabella more pettish, Millicent more blowsy and coarse.

To their amazement and indignation, the sound of one of Schubert's Nocturnes floated out from the parlor window as they advanced.

"Who is presuming to play on our piano?" said Mrs. Copman, in a rage.

"And the windows all open, too, fading the parlor carpet!" screamed Miss Millicent.

"As sure as you live, mamma," gasped Arabella, "it's that bold parson's daughter—Jetty Lane."

"The impudence of some people!" cried Marion. "When mamma as good as ordered her off the premises not a month ago."

"Henry," said Mrs. Copman sourly, as she caught sight of her son-in-law, serenely smoking his cigar just inside of the casement, "why is it that the carriage was not sent to meet us? Why are we compelled to walk all the way from the station in this broiling heat? And what is that young woman here for?" as she caught sight of Jetty's white dress in the background of the large dim room.

"The carriage was not sent for you," said Mr. Charteris calmly, "because Mrs. Charteris was using it."

"Mrs. Charteris!" gasped the widow, dropping at least half-a-dozen of her parcels in the path, while Henry led forward the lovely young bride, all in white, with cheeks like pale roses.

"Mrs. Charteris," he repeated. "My wife. Let me present you and the Misses Copman to her."

And that was the end of the complication.

For, of course, Mrs Copman and her daughters were too high spirited to remain under the same roof with such a dimpled and lovely young usurper.

And they removed all that belonged to them, and a good deal that didn't from the house the next day, in high dudgeon.

"To think what fools men are!" said the widow. "When dear Henry was so comfortable with me and the three girls."

But, apparently, dear Henry was of quite a different way of thinking.

For as he stood with Jetty on the terrace, watching the carriage drive away which contained the widow and her daughter, he said—

"My dear, I feel as if a nightmare were lifted off my life. And now we can begin to be happy."

KLEPTOMANIACS.

A FAMOUS physician informs us that a woman who was exemplary in her obedience to that moral law except the eighth commandment was so addicted to larceny that, when she could take nothing more valuable she would often at the table of a friend secretly fill her pockets with bread.

Lavater states that a doctor of medicine could not leave his patients' rooms without taking something away unobserved; and his wife searched his pockets, and returned to their owners the knives, scissors, thimbles, etc., which her husband had abstracted.

The wife of another physician had so strong a propensity to steal that on making purchases she endeavored to take something away that did not belong to her; and two German countesses appear to have been guilty of the same vice.

The almoner of a regiment of Prussian cuirassiers, a well-educated man, frequently on parade stole the handkerchief of the officers; and one unfortunate man was so far under the influence of kleptomania that being nigh unto death, he actually secreted the snuff-box of his confessor!

We knew a parish clergyman, says *Chambers' Journal*, who stole every article he could lay his hands on.

If out at dinner, he pocketed scraps of bread, table napkins, or anything. When lodging at hotels he carried off pieces of soap and the ends of candles from his bedroom.

His larcenies became so notorious that he was ultimately brought before the Church courts, and turned out of his living.

The London *Times*, a few years ago, in commenting upon the subject of a lady kleptomaniac being prosecuted for stealing cambric handkerchiefs in a draper's shop, stated that "every one who is acquainted with London society could at once furnish a dozen names of ladies who have been notorious for abstracting articles of trifling value from the shops where they habitually dealt."

Their *modus operandi* was so well known that on their return from their drives their relatives took care to ascertain the nature of their paltry peculations, inquired from the coachman the houses at which he had been ordered to stop, and, as a matter of course, re-imbursed the tradesman to the full value of the pilfered goods.

In other cases a hint was given to the various shop-keepers at whose establishments those monomaniacs made their purchases, and they were simply forewarned to notice what was taken away, and to furnish the bill, which was paid for as soon as furnished and as the matter of course by the pilferer herself, without any feeling of shame or emotion of any kind.

It is also stated in the *Quarterly Review* in 1856, in an article upon the Metropolitan Police, that "the extent of pilfering carried on even by ladies of rank and position is very great, there are persons possessing a mania of this kind so well known among the shopkeeping community that their addresses and descriptions are passed from hand to hand for mutual security. The attendants allow them to secrete what they like without seeming to observe them, and afterward send a bill with the prices of the goods purloined to their houses."

FROST, THE RED-NOSED.—In Russian folk-lore Frost the Red-nosed often figures as a being of irresistible might, but of a not altogether inexorable nature. Many functions are attributed to him, mostly of a beneficent kind. He is the smith that makes the chains which fetter the earth and restrain the rivers throughout the winter; he is the bridge-builder, a true Samson, who, without an axe, without a wedge, constructs bridges across all waters. Sometimes as in many German and other tales, he appears as one of the supernatural attendants of a hero who is exposed to many trials, and who, by the cold producing power of Frost, is saved from the fiery furnace into which he is thrust. It is said to be still the custom in Russian villages for the head of each family on Christmas Eve to take a spoonful of the food on the table and offer it to the genius of winter, crying aloud, Frost, Frost, come and eat! Frost, Frost, do not kill our oats! Hammer our flax and hemp deep into the ground!"

Everybody admires beautiful hair, and every one may possess it, by using Ayer's Hair Vigor.

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The Great Blood Purifier.
FOR THE CURE OF CHRONIC DISEASE.
SCROFULOUS OR SYPHILITIC, HEREDITARY OR CONTAGIOUS.

Chronic Rheumatism, Scrofula, Glandular Swelling, Hacking Dry Cough, Cancerous Affections, Syphilitic Complaints, Bleeding of the Lungs, Dyspepsia, Water Brash, White Swelling, Tumors, Hip Diseases, Mercurial Diseases, Female Complaints, Gout Dropsy, Bronchitis, Consumption.

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Urinary and Womb Diseases, Gravel, Diabetes, Dropsy, Stoppage of Water, Incontinence of Urine, Bright's Disease, Albuminuria, and in all cases where there are brick-dust deposits, or the water is thick, cloudy or mixed with substances like the white of an egg, or threads like white silk, or there is a morbid, dark, bilious appearance and white bone-dust deposits, and where there is a pricking, burning sensation when passing water, and pain in the small of the back and along the loins.

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RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.
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MRS. HENSBERRY, *344 Franklin Ave., Syracuse, N. Y.*, after a severe attack of Erysipelas in the head, found her hair—already ... falling off so rapidly that she soon became quite bald. One bottle of HALL'S HAIR RENEWER brought it back as soft, brown and thick as when she was a girl.

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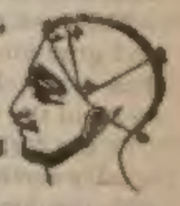

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Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

WHILE very full, much puffed back draperies are so universally the rule, it is rather singular to see one style coming to the front which is in as direct opposition to the "pouf" as can well be.

This style is that of the "demi-princesse" or "corsage-casaque," as it is called in Paris, to which locality its success has as yet been confined, specimens of it having not yet reached us to any noteworthy extent.

The "corsage-casaque" is simply an ordinary bodice in front, while in the back it is lengthened into large straight, heavy plaits, lined throughout with wiggen or crinoline to make them hang properly, and reaching well down to the foot of the lower skirt.

Hair-cloth of the sort used to make bustles, is also taken for a lining, but it is not recommended, being apt to break into ugly folds as soon as the wearer has sat down in her "demi-princesse" a few times. A bustle is of course worn with the "corsage-casaques."

Because they hang straight they must not for that reason hang flat.

This new model is adopted both for wool dresses and for silks.

In the latter case the "demi-princesse" is of brocade, frequently changeable; the skirt is of plain silk, trimmed either with flounces of the same, pinked to give them a fluffy appearance, or with rows of deep embroidery on ecru net.

When made of wool goods some velvet may be used to advantage in broad rows against the plaits of the "corsage-casaque," also on the front of the bodice and perhaps in a border on the kilts or box plaits, which are effective for the lower skirt.

A simple and very serviceable costume is the result; one which might be recommended for traveling during the coming summer made either of some dark shade, such as deep brown, blue or green, or in one of the prevailing grays, Sudan or ecrus and of light Summer bison cloth, cheviot, lady's cloth or other suitable material of that nature.

A loose paletot or raglan could be made to match and would be very useful, or a close redingote, perfectly plain.

Trim little straw bonnets or round hats of the "English walking" shape, and cocardes of ribbon in the dominant tones of the costume.

Speaking of serviceable dresses, mention must be made of the pin-checked wool goods brought out in such profusion this season, and so eminently suited to make costumes of that kind.

They are very inexpensive—fifty cents per yard, double width—neat and lady-like always, and of excellent wearing qualities.

Finished with rows of ribbon velvet on the flouncing, and with bows of the same to hold up the full overdress, and with a round waist with belt, collar and cuffs of velvet, they would make a most desirable every day dress for a young lady.

If the still simpler tailor style is preferred they show to equally good advantage.

Pin-checked and pin-striped Summer silks are as popular as they were last season, and can also be trimmed with velvet ribbon.

These are the styles that vary little from year to year.

Polka dotted foulards, especially in dark blue and in black, are old standbys.

They are again made up with white, ecru and gray embroideries or heavy guipures. The plain Indian silks and the pongees come in the same category.

Of the former we saw one really exceptionally stylish dress last week.

It was deep blue, with trimmings of ecru net lightly embroidered in red, and knots of red velvet ribbon, gave a brilliant note of color to the whole.

There was a plaited flounce at the foot of the skirt, a border of the embroidered net on the edge.

The front of the tunic had the appearance of three diagonal draperies, each edged with a flounce of embroidery; it fell over the lower flounce on the right side, but was much higher on the left, and there secured by two great bunches of red velvet loops and ends.

The back drapery described two short full puffs right under the position of the basque, and then fell straightly in heavy folds; the puffs with crinoline, which held them out quite stiffly.

In front the basque was pointed, with a full plastron, consisting of two rows of the embroidered flouncing sewed together, drawn in below the waist line.

There was a turned down collar of the embroidery with a bunch of velvet knots, minus ends, at the throat, knots also against the sleeves, which had a little diagonal drapery of the embroidery shirred and plaited.

Another charming Summer dress seen is of brocaded veiling with red flowers on a robin's-egg ground.

A plaited flounce, very narrow, runs all around the skirt; above it are, in the back, two plaitings, the upper one four inches, the lower one six inches deep; in the front is one box-plaited flounce three-quarters of a yard in depth; the overdress is laid in heavy, full folds that fall from the left hip way down on the right to the bottom of the skirt; the back drapery is full and narrow; the basque, pointed in front, had a postillion back, slit up nearly to the waist line on the side back seams; from underneath the postillion falls a great bunch of gray and scarlet ribbons over the drapery of the skirt; the waist has a jabot of lace and a turn-down collar, four inches deep, to match, with a standing ruffle of lace inside, and knots of scarlet and gray ribbon are set against the sleeves and at the throat. These brocaded veilings and cashmeres should certainly be very popular the coming season.

They will make a little change from the plain veilings, though of these no one certainly would feel inclined to complain.

By-the-by, quantities of the latter are selling in the various apricot and other new yellowish pink shades.

The tints are very becoming to brunettes, but less so to blondes.

In any case, they require to be softened by a plentiful admixture of white lace or embroidery.

Knots of apricot ribbon being added, and thrown here, there and everywhere, they make very pretty dresses indeed, rather a pleasant relief from the mass of pink, white and pale blue veilings.

The brocaded cashmeres have one advantage, in that they are dressy and pretty in the darker shades, which the plain veilings never are.

And there are many wet evenings in Summer when a dark dress would be nice, and yet a woman might not care to wear a silk or a costume of some other heavy material.

A brocaded veiling, with dark flowers on a dark seal, blue or maroon ground, a lace or embroidered net jabot, and knots of ribbons to enliven the whole, would come in very nicely on such occasions—really supply a "want long felt."

The Indian silks plain and brocaded, with dark rich grounds, are also very useful for the same purposes, and very handsome besides.

The popular shoulder-capes have appeared in a new form.

They are now made of white Orienta lace, or net covered with large "appliqué" flowers, and worn in lieu of some other form of neckwear in the house.

Later on they will be charming with all kinds of white dresses.

The majority are made with the high gathered shoulders; the short sleeves are frequently simulated by three plaited rows of lace.

Another forms an edging all round the cape, and about the neck is a full ruche.

One extremely pretty model of "appliqué" embroidered on net is made without the sleeve pieces, a jabot of Oriental lace being carried around the arm size, and a bunch of white satin looks falling from underneath, on the arm.

The neck is finished with a ruche of lace and a knot of ribbon.

Among the bewildering number of nainsooks everywhere to be seen, we recently noticed a dress for half-mourning which was rather outside of the common.

It was trimmed with a flounce, three-eighths of a yard wide, of black and white embroidery; the overdress was tucked up on the sides in full plaits and trimmed with a band of the same embroidery six inches wide.

Fireside Chat.

SCREENS AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

A WORD must be said about making the most of the pictures we have. In the most unlikely ones there is generally some little scrap—a figure, a tree, or something worth cutting out, to fill up a space in another.

A landscape, too uninteresting to be used as it stands, may be enlivened and brought into service by adding figures cut from other pictures, or it will, at any rate, furnish a tree or rock to help out some other one.

Ships may be put on the sea or lake, animals and birds in the woods, and thus

[illegible]nde useful by odds
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It is [illegible]fit to get enough
large tree[illegible] requires out-door
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person think to save trouble by [illegible]unwary
nish alone without first applying the [illegible]ng var-
It entirely spoils the color of the pict[illegible]ure.
and she who tries it will prove the truth[illegible]ures,
the adage, that "lazy people take the most [illegible]t of
pains."

All that is necessary now to complete our screen is to cover the edges with strips of stamped leather, which can be bought ready for the purpose, and to fasten the wings together by means of small hinges, which are sold with screws to fit them at any ironmonger's.

In the same category with these ordinary scrap screens come the rather more ambitious styles, in which a little painting may be introduced—a little only—so that the modest and unaspiring young artist need not be frightened from the attempt as being a too ambitious one.

The method is this: Suppose, for instance, winter is the subject chosen for one wing.

The paper for the groundwork is a dull, grey color, and we have a considerable number of suitable pictures, but still not nearly enough for the whole wing.

Those we have are arranged so as to form, as far as possible, a continuous scene.

At the bottom is a pond, with a group of skaters, and a road leading up, on one side of which is a forest with snow-covered hills in the distance, and further on a cottage, with a tired wanderer just reaching the door, and so on.

It is most improbable that these pictures will fit in to one another comfortably, so as to produce at all the desired effect, so we arrange them the best we can, and then paint in all the rest.

If the road, in the bottom picture stops short, we mix our paints to as nearly as possible the same tints, and continue the highway up the screen.

We add snow to the branches of the trees in the forest and paste a pack of wolves, or some other suitable wintry subject over the picnic party, who are enjoying themselves in the original.

In this way, the most unlikely pictures can be made to suggest the depth of winter by cutting pieces out, joining others together, and when necessary, painting in entire scenes.

The result will be rather patchy and unsatisfactory at first, but all the little deficiences will be hidden by the varnish.

Many girls have found that by beginning to paint in this way they have acquired courage and enterprise to continue on a larger scale.

Another plan is to cover them with a better paper than is generally used; then get for each wing two or three really good groups of flowers or fruits, not more than three. These pictures are then extended by the addition of painted butterflies, birds, additional sprays of flowers and grasses; or sometimes a basket, in which they are resting.

This is excellent practice, and the most timid need not be afraid of trying to paint in this way, as an unsuccessful attempt can be so easily covered by another picture.

Quite a different form of screen is that consisting of a frame, resembling in shape an enlarged flap of a clothes-horse, but supported on spreading feet, so that it may stand firm.

Some half yard below the top bar is a second cross-bar, furnished with rings, from which hangs a curtain.

This screen may be made economically also; a carpenter will provide the simple, strong, wooden frame for a small sum, and we ourselves can easily ornament it by painting it over with black enamel paint and liquid gold, or lacquering it in some of the ways made so easy for amateurs nowadays.

Coming to the curtain itself, if economy be our object, perhaps nothing looks so well, at a small cost, as a handsome design crewelled on colored Bolton sheeting, which is very inexpensive, peacocks' feathers, worked in their natural colors on an art green ground, are extremely pretty. A curtain of Utrecht velvet, with the design traced in gold thread, would be very handsome; cretonne appliqué would be suitable for a bedroom; but perhaps the most beautiful of all would be a curtain of tapestry painting on canvas, the method of doing which has already been fully described.

For a small standing fire screen a modification of this last style of screen would be suitable, or one can buy the frames made in bamboo with the centre left vacant to be filled up according to the taste of the owner.

One way in which these frames are frequently filled up, is to arrange pressed ferns and flowers between two sheets of glass, with a few bright-hued butterflies to add color and life; the wings of butterflies only are needed—the bodies are painted in afterwards.

For this kind of work gum tragacanth should be used, as it leaves no mark if it exudes beyond the edges of the leaves.

Correspondence.

MRS.—She may have been, but we never heard of her.

M. L. B.—Amongst ordinary children nine would be quite early enough for learning music.

WILLIE.—Mr. Charles Kean was buried at Hurnlean, Hampshire, Eng., 1868.

ARENA.—To have a healthy color is desirable; when a girl ceases to blush she has lost one of the greatest of her charms.

HONOR.—As a gentleman and a man of honor, confess your wrong and ask forgiveness. If she loves you she will forgive you.

HELEN.—It is quite possible that powder of the kind may be prepared, but we have not heard of it, therefore cannot say how it is to be used.

CAMELLIA.—The Botanical term, "Tetradynamous," is a Greek word, and is applied to plants that have six stamens—four long and two short.

DEUX.—Satin of light color will dye black beautifully; indeed there are few materials that can be dyed so successfully as satin.

NETTIE.—1. Mizpah is the Hebrew, signifying "a watch-tower." The common acceptation of the word is, "I will watch over thee."

INVALID.—We prefer not to give our opinion about any of the proprietary medicines of the day.

DETO[illegible].—Geek fire was known in Eastern Europe as early as the year 673. It was introduced by Callinicus, the philosopher.

JENNIE W.—The library of the Vatacin was commenced [illegible] years ago. It contains 10,000 manuscripts, among which are some by Pliny.

WILFUL.—Consult your parents in regard to the matter. Nay, more, consult them in every important step you may [illegible] about to take.

GARIBALDI.—1. You are the right age. 2. You writing must be greatly improved. 3. The examinations are, we believe, very thorough and somewhat difficult.

POLLY.—The unlikely way to find out if he loves you is to wait till he tells you. Know whether he does or not, instead will [illegible] girl to give her heart unasked.

ANNIE.—It is not likely that he would keep company with you for three years unless he cared something for you. Still, it is time he came to the point.

NELLY.—It would be better for you to wait till he asks permission to call. Do your parents know that you are corresponding with him? If not, you should let them know at once.

ANXIOUS.—Certainly, instruction in some of the first principles of religion should be given a child as soon as it begins to understand anything.

A. R. P.—We think that this young man likes you, and, if his circumstances permit it, will probably propose in due time. Do not be too impatient. You must give the intimacy time to ripen.

CURTIS.—We do not possess the secret of charming young men into love; that is a faculty possessed by [illegible] only, and therefore your first question must remain without further answer.

P. P.—Dogs in a state of nature never bark. The barking of a dog is an acquired faculty—an effort to speak, derived from his associations with man. The Australian dog never barks.

R. F.—Nearly all the amber of commerce comes from Eastern Prussia, where it is obtained by dredging the bottom of the sea just off the coast.

POLITICIAN.—You are right. Thos. Calhoun filled various offices of appointment and election, for [illegible] fifty years before he was sent to the United States Senate.

DUBOIS.—The Golden Fleece is the fleece of gold fabled to have been taken from the ram that bore Phryxus through the air to Colchis, and in quest of which Jason undertook the Argonautic expedition.

L. D. H.—From a careful consideration of your letter, we imagine you to be possessed of a hasty temper, and to have been the cause of the quarrel. If such be the case, you should make the first advances towards reconciliation.

L. M.—Simply write: It will afford me great pleasure to have you call [illegible] the time. 2. We do not think it wrong. On the contrary, if all is fair and just, they would be very strange lovers indeed who did not kiss each other.

BLOSSOM.—You can mix dextrine with anything on earth you please. What do you mean? For what purpose do you wish to use it? If as gum, dissolve in warm water until it is as thick as you wish it.

CONN.—Sir Walter Scott introduces Robin Hood in two of his novels—"Ivanhoe" and "The Talisman." In the former he appears as Locksley the Archer, at the tournament. He is also called Diccon "Bold-the-bow."

AEROLITE.—The largest meteoric stone at present known is in the province of Tucuman, in South Africa. It is in the midst of an extensive plain, and its weight is estimated at 20,000 pounds.

READER.—1. Scotch whisky is a very pale straw color. Irish is a darker color, more like pale brandy. 2. A non-commissioned officer is one receiving his rank from a subordinate authority—a sergeant a corporal.

JONES.—Be perfectly frank and truthful with the suspicious person and everyone else. 2. We think her a very good-natured young lady if she keeps her temper with you when you ask such silly questions.

L. E.—You are right in your views. The young lady should not accept presents from a former lover while she is betrothed to you. It would be proper for you to acquaint her with your wishes on the subject, and if she really loves you she will readily accede to them.

BEE.—Your letter savors strongly of the Romeo and Juliet school. Do you know the cause of your parents' aversion to the family of your lover? By your account, he is active in a strictly honorable manner. Speak frankly to your parents, and tell them of your predilection for him, and the offer he has made to you.